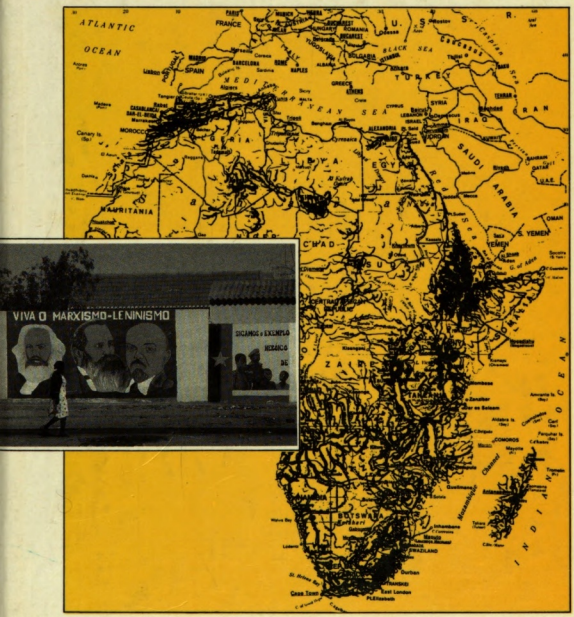
Samir Amin

DELINKING



Towards a Polycentric World

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Delinking

Towards a Polycentric World

Samir Amin

Translated by Michael Wolfers

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Preface to the English edition

The appearance of *La Déconnexion* in French, Arabic and Spanish has recently revived the perennial debate over the degree of real constraint represented by worldwide expansion of the economy. The prevailing thesis does, as we know, reject any possibility of envisaging any kind of national autonomy for the future, and makes the external constraint an inescapable absolute. The new language of the countries of the East and the performances of the newly industrializing countries (NICs) also strengthens the impression that the neo-liberal discourse will no longer have any competitor.

It is not my view. In a work on social movements to appear soon, the authors Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, André Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein observe in their joint introduction that ten years ago when they jointly published *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, they attributed the crisis to anything but the price of oil, forgotten nowadays even by those who had no other name than 'energy crisis' for the situation. In ten years time neo-liberalism will have met the same fate.

This book is a plea for reconstruction of the world on the basis of polycentrism. My thesis is certainly founded on the refusal to accept that the worldwide law of value provides the exclusive criterion of 'rationality'. This law is, on the contrary, to blame for 'currently existing capitalism': a world typified necessarily by the increasing polarization of wealth and power, and thereby unacceptable. But my thesis is not synonymous with autarky, as hasty readers (or even non-readers!) seem to think. It is for the reader to judge.

Worldwide expansion and polarization

We all live, it is said, on the same planet and we share a common destiny. Does this commonplace lead to the conclusion that interdependence imposes subordination of the plans of all the societies on the planet to the same criterion of rationality governing worldwide expansion of the market? This opinion, although prevalent nowadays, is not only entirely mistaken, but also infinitely dangerous.

Currently existing capitalism is a system that produces and reproduces the worldwide polarization of wealth and power. This polarization was speeded up

at two periods: in the 18th century when the European West definitively overtook the civilized Orients in wealth and power, and in the 19th century when the industrial revolution enabled the effective imperialist conquest of Asia and Africa; it is en route to a third stage on the basis of the technological revolution under way.

Modern history has, over five centuries, been shot through by a standing contradiction, always renewed and never surmounted, between the pressures exercised by worldwide capitalist expansion on all the societies of the planet, with a tendency to subject their entire evolution to the exclusive logic of its expansion, and the renewed revolts against this submission, notably from the peripheralized regions, revolts that have reached the pitch of a rupture with, and quasi-autarkic escape from, the system.

Distinct successive phases can be discerned in this history, some marked by the predominance of the trend to worldwide expansion, and others (from 1914 to 1945 for instance) of break-up of the system. After the Second World War the world market was reconstituted in an atmosphere created by the hegemony of the United States. The new worldwide expansion, truncated by the exclusion of the socialist countries, provided the foundation of the political and strategic polarization. This worldwide expansion was momentarily split by the United States' economic hegemony wearing thin, but was nonetheless well able to withstand the mercantile conflict within the OECD. At this level the so-called 'liberal' counter-offensive has borne fruit and the Western bloc has been reconstituted in the light of Eastern countries on the defensive and the Third World in disarray.

Has the worldwide expansion reached a stage that will make it impossible in the future to go back to a break-up of the system? Do new interdependences – in technology, ecology, weaponry, communications – constitute the absolute constraints of a new globalization? Is the direction one of reintegration of the 'ex-socialist' countries in this worldwide capitalist expansion? Did 1917 merely open a parenthesis in history that is by way of being closed? Has the Third World no other option than that offered by 'new industrialization' aimed at the world market and one for which certain East Asian countries provide the model? Must the illusion of autonomous, socially balanced development be abandoned once and for all and the inescapable price of 'accumulation' be met?

The demands of worldwide expansion were expressed in the post-war upsurge, from 1945 to 1970, by a complementary twofold paradigm. In the developed countries Keynesian interventionism was thought to be capable of ensuring continual growth for the benefit of everyone, removing the conjunctural fluctuations and reducing unemployment to a minimum. This performance seemed all the more remarkable as it was in harmony with an external opening-up that put out of mind the memory of the possible conflicts between national politics and the spread of this worldwide expansion. In the Third World countries the ideology of the 'Bandung era' (from 1955 to 1975) suggested that development receptive to the advantages of interdependence could be controlled nationally. The consensus in both categories suggested that the shades of meaning and debate lay within these paradigms. By contrast, the

socialist countries took refuge in the isolation of a third paradigm, hostile on principle to interdependence. But since the autocratic and autarkic state of Stalinism was shaken, a glimmer of hope appeared that liberalism – as a prelude to democratization – would also bring an external opening-up.

The crisis of capitalism has certainly put an end to the Keynesian illusions and to those of the ideology of development, while the ideology of socialism has certainly not yet encountered a solution to its problems. But the vacuum caused by this triple crisis has been filled by a conservative offensive of a 'neo-liberalism' preaching a universal remedy – the market. But the stubborn pursuit of the policies that this dogma inspires can lead only to disaster and the contrary of the objective it seeks: to disaggregation of the world system and a renewal of confused clashes between unbridled nationalisms.

The theoretical and ideological disarray stems largely from the fact that the social sciences and prevailing ideologies – on the left and the right – are constructed on a systematic underestimation of the crucial significance of the polarizing effect of capitalist expansion, and swept along with the optimism of the 19th century, believing that capitalism was capable of homogenizing the world on the basis of rapid and general development of the forces of production. The reality of the polarization suggests an alternative unfolding of history. Social contrasts, intolerable at the periphery of the system, provide the objective conditions for a revolution directed against this currently existing capitalism; one that inaugurates a long post-capitalist period not of 'socialist construction', but of national and popular construction in which a conflict persists between the tendencies of socialism, capitalism and statism, articulated on a dialectic between national autonomy and relations with the world capitalist system. This long transition calls for delinking, not in the sense of an autarkic withdrawal, but from subjection of the external relations of the national and popular society to the imperatives of the complex stages of its internal development. This necessity is binding on all, as the sole alternative to the devastating effects of the pursuit of peripheral capitalist expansion. It is binding on the countries of the newly industrializing semi-periphery and on those of the fourth world, on the big states (USSR, China, India or Brazil) and on the small countries of Central America or of Africa. Its concrete modalities, specific to each situation, are the problems of the 'difficult transition'.

Is there any hope of making international relations evolve in a direction that would minimize the damaging effects of integration in the web of relations of the world capitalist system? Could what I call delinking be the means of reconstructing the world on the basis of a genuine polycentrism? Might it provide favourable conditions for a renaissance of a leftward evolution in the developed Western world, and thus lay the foundation for a renewal of internationalism of peoples and universalism? These are the real challenges of our time.

Liberal utopia

The liberal doctrine is founded on the idea that development is synonymous with market expansion and that at world level it is the product of a constant process of adjustment of the national reality to world constraints. The naive version of the doctrine reduces this adjustment to liberalization of trade and capital flows. In its 'realpolitik' version, it believes that the policies of the state (whose crucial role it does not deny) and the objectives of cultural and social change must be conceived as instruments of this adjustment attained by the combined means of the market and state intervention.

In all these cases the liberal doctrine is pure ideology, without any scientific foundation. The theory on which it is founded assumes that the market as a whole will ensure the maximization of growth and an equitable distribution on the basis of full employment. But for the market as a whole to be effective, that market must include all the output and all the factors of production (goods, capital and labour). The liberal doctrine claims its legitimacy from the fact that this kind of totally integrated market has given the expected results . . . in the developed capitalist countries. The swindle lies in extending this conclusion to the world system while the world market remains a truncated market that embraces only output and capital, as free movement of labour is obviously not on the agenda of what is politically acceptable!

It is therefore understandable why all of history contradicts the liberal thesis and that polarization is the inescapable consequence of the truncated market it proposes. Under these circumstances, subjection of national policies to the supreme criterion of worldwide 'competitiveness' is a bogus response to the challenge. By contrast, the objective of development implies a sustained and constant improvement of productivity in all possible fields, from a given starting point, and action to ensure that the benefits of this improvement should be broadly distributed and permit the gradual integration of all the population in the dynamic of progress. Or, in other words, a policy rejecting the marginalization induced by the implementation of the absolute rule of international competitiveness. Competitiveness is at best a further effect of progress and always relative and segmentary.

Pursuit of the liberal utopia will of necessity not mitigate but aggravate all the social contradictions. It is disastrous for peoples throughout the earth, North, South and East; but certainly more so for the peoples of the South than for the others. According to the liberal policy, its effectiveness depends on three groups of conditions. First, it demands that the worldwide expansion it envisages should mitigate the contradictions in the peripheries of the system. But this is not the case. On the contrary, polarization has become more explosive than ever in the 'semi-industrialized' countries of the Third World; and worldwide expansion, in marginalizing the 'fourth world' it dooms to destruction, encounters an obstacle it cannot overcome. Second, it demands that the worldwide expansion, even in the West, should be able to ensure the necessary reconversions without social disasters. But so long as liberalization is sailing ahead this is not so. Third, it demands that the USSR, China and others

should subject their economic and political national strategies to the imperatives of capitalist expansion like vulgar 'peripheries'. But this is not the case, and the socialist countries will rather seek to retain control of their external relations so that eventually they may intensify these for the benefit of their own strategies.

In these circumstances, the strength of the constraint of worldwide expansion is more apparent than real and the threat of a break-up ever present. I am convinced that if this murderous folly does not lead to catastrophe in the years to come, the fashion will have passed in ten years' time.

It is fashionable to say nowadays that differentiation within the Third World makes it impossible to speak of it in the singular. It is fashionable to say that the newly industrializing countries (NICs) are 'semi-peripheries' on the way to 'catching up', and that their integration in the world market is the key to their miracle, whereas the 'delinked despite themselves' – marginalized in the world system – constitute a shipwrecked fourth world. It is fashionable to draw the conclusion from this comparison that delinking would be an unfortunate and dangerous utopianism. I strongly reject all these theses.

First, the NICs are not semi-peripheries on the way to catching up but in every sense the real peripheries of tomorrow. For the conditions imposed by polarization within the worldwide system are in fact increasingly unfavourable: in the 19th century two or three decades were sufficient for Germany to 'catch up and overtake' Great Britain. How long would it take Brazil to 'catch up' the United States? In the semi-industrialized peripheries the model of development pursued is faced now with a decisive choice. As world polarization brings an internal polarization founded on more and more unequal internal income distribution, the development recommended by the liberal doctrine leads to gigantic social problems. Either these countries will embark upon the path of progressive responses to these problems, and obviously will clash with the simple logic of the worldwide expansion of the market. Or they will not, and will accord priority to the demands of 'adjustment'; and democracy will wither before it has taken root in the society. The example of Brazil in this regard is striking.

Second, differentiation within the peripheries and the 'fourth world' is not a new phenomenon. Capitalism in its polarizing worldwide expansion has always led to the exclusion and destruction of peripheral regions that had lost the role they played, sometimes oustandingly, at an earlier stage. What has become of the Caribbean and Brazilian North-East, the setting for the 'economic miracle' of the mercantilist era? Are not the system that has confined Africa to specialization in agriculture and mining, by extensive exploitation of soils to the point of exhaustion, and the technological revolution that obviates the need for certain raw materials, on the way to excluding the African continent from the world division of labour? The societies of the fourth world undergoing a passive delinking that rejects them cannot find an answer to their problems through the virtues alone of an open door. Does not recolonization, sweetened by charity, aim at concealing the certain failure of the neo-liberal solution?

One planet, several systems

The simple solution of the market is always incapable of avoiding the appearance of internal and international, social and political contrasts that reach an intolerable pitch. Legitimation of the ideological discourse of neo-liberalism pretends to ignore that the market by itself can only reproduce and heighten these contrasts, and that scientific analysis of the real advantages of the market is meaningless, unless the advantages are related to the determinants of the social system: levels of development, historical place in the world division of labour and the social alliances it has forged and that reproduce it. Critical thought is concerned to discover what might be the alternative alliances susceptible of offering an escape from the vicious cycles imposed by the market. From this point of view the substantial differences between the various regions of the world necessarily entail specific policies that cannot be derived from the rationality solely of the market. These objective reasons are complemented by equally legitimate differences, relating to the culture and ideological and political options of the history of the peoples. The genuine imperatives of our time entail the reconstruction of the world system on the basis of polycentrism. This is my definition of the concept of delinking, one that, as can be seen, has nothing to do with exclusion or autarkic withdrawal. It is a matter of subjecting the mutual relations between the various nations and regions of the whole of the planet to the varying imperatives of their own internal development and not the reverse. That is, a readiness to adjust to the worldwide expansion of capitalism. It is a plea in favour of 'reciprocal adjustment' (instead of unilateral adjustment, of the weakest to the strongest), and I regard it as the only possible realistic humanist discourse of our time. We counter the slogan 'interdependence governs everything', with another: 'one planet, several systems, in the hope of a polycentric world'.

The social alliances defining the content of the strategies of the various countries and regions of our planet are themselves specific. In the West their bourgeois aspect, founded on a long history that has produced the advanced development, is obvious. This does not preclude evolution towards the gradual socialization of the system. In the countries of the East the strategies call for a liberation of society from the exclusive yoke of statism, to the benefit of a dialectic acknowledging the conflicts between the social forces of socialism and capitalism. But in the Third World the strategies almost always entail a more radical than evolutionary reversal of tendencies, and the rejection of the bourgeois subordination that reproduces an intolerable system. In all cases it is right to substitute a national, popular and regional content for the exclusive bourgeois vision of the market, but consciousness of the crisis represented by this option is much more acute in the South than in the West and the East. To some extent, however, perestroika is required everywhere. To refuse it, through the prevailing discourse of neo-liberalism, is to make certain a response by the peoples in the form of the despair of racisms, primitive nationalisms and religious or other fundamentalisms.

A strategy of development of new North–South relations is the central axis of this necessary reconstruction of the world. This essential radical change in the very concept of North–South relations entails, in turn, a revision of all aspects of the political options, as regards intra-European relations, relations with the United States and Japan, and East–West relations. This is the price of realism and modernity; it lies to the left.

Samir Amin
1989

Foreword

The thesis presented in this work – the necessity of 'delinking' from the system of worldwide expansion of capitalism – is, in our opinion, little known and perhaps therefore even less accepted.

The book should certainly explain the concept of 'delinking' and avoid a simplistic reading of it as, for example, merely a synonym for economic autarky. It should accordingly reach beyond the discourse of politicians, especially those in the benighted Third World who use the term with an increasing frequency that does not make up for the persistent muddling of propositions, although such confusion is at least in part intentional.

The delinking thesis embraces the following four propositions:

First, the necessity of delinking is the logical political outcome of the unequal character of the development of capitalism. This concept of unequal development goes deeper than the superficial aspect revealed in the pyramidal distribution of average income per capita in the various capitalist countries. It implies a certain concept of the law of value and a theory of the value of labour power and transfers of value in the world system. Unequal development, in this sense, is the origin of essential social, political and ideological evolutions such as, for example, the phenomenon of social democracy and the apparent decline of Marxism in the West, and the emergence of national revolutions in the periphery.

Second, delinking is a necessary condition of any socialist advance, in the North and in the South. This proposition is, in our view, essential for a reading of Marxism that genuinely takes into account the unequal character of capitalist development.

Third, the potential advances that become available through delinking will not 'guarantee' certainty of further evolution towards a pre-defined 'socialism'. Socialism is still a future that must be built.

Fourth, the option for delinking must be discussed in political terms. This proposition derives from a reading according to which economic constraints are absolute only for those who accept the commodity alienation intrinsic to capitalism, and turn it into an ahistorical system of eternal validity. Keeping the debate on a political plane implies in turn a concrete tactical analysis articulated with a strategy that is itself evolving.

These considerations explain the organization of this work in three parts.

In the first part we pose a broad problematic of delinking and deal successively with the questions of conceptualization and strategy, and then tactical considerations.

In the second part, we attempt to answer some of the main objections made to the delinking thesis. Delinking is the only possible answer for the peoples on the periphery of the system, since the unequal development of capitalism necessarily provokes class contradictions there to an explosive degree. The revolutions that have resulted from this unequal development (in Russia and China) can in no way be reduced to moments of capitalist expansion; and capitalist expansion pursued elsewhere in the peripheries of the system that have not delinked retains the specific characteristics that prevent it being assimilated into capitalist expansion in the centres of the system. The delinking thesis demands a reading of Marxism that takes account of its Afro-Asiatic relevance.

In the third part, we examine two proposals for 'delinking' that fall outside the method of historical materialism: that of the movement of the Greens (in the broad sense) in the West and that of Islamic fundamentalism. The current significance of these two trends, both moreover founded on a cultural approach to history, is evidence of the objective character of the social need for 'delinking', even if, in our opinion, they offer no real response to the challenge facing contemporary societies in crisis.

As the problem raised is, we believe, fundamental, it goes without saying that the manner of defining it depends largely on the underlying theoretical concepts. Our adherence to Marxism is not in any sense fundamentalist. The propositions of Marx do not seem to us necessarily and totally indisputable, although the method of historical materialism does not seem to us obsolete. Our concern is not that of a Marxian, nor do we seek to define a 'true Marxism', as we accept from the start the legitimacy of a plurality of Marxisms. In this spirit we find useful the distinction between the essential and the circumstantial in Marx's explanation of historical materialism, as we stress what is, in our opinion, the unseen in the dominant texts of Marxism. In the same spirit the successive contributions of Lenin and Mao are accepted as the understandable products of the evolution of reality and, in this regard, largely positive, even if they are in no sense definitive or complete. On the contrary, the eventual discovery of their historical limits is of greater interest. Capitalist society moreover is still evolving; the problematic of state, nation and social class cannot today, in the era of greater worldwide expansion of the system, be identical to that of 100, or even 50, years ago. Wherever necessary, our views on all these matters are explained in the text (sometimes by cross-reference to other works where we have dealt with the matter more systematically). We wanted to avoid distracting attention with digressions; and, rather the reverse, have chosen to focus the argument on the issue of delinking, the title of the work.*

* The author is currently directing a research programme entitled 'Strategies for the future of Africa'. This book deals to some extent with aspects of the themes tackled in the programme.

Although the views expressed here are entirely personal and commit only the author, our thanks go to the institutions associated with the programme, the Third World Forum, the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Institute for Research and Training (UNITAR), as well as Sweden's SAREC (the Swedish agency for co-operation in research) which along with UNU provides essential financial support.

1. The Worldwide Expansion of Capitalism

The past 30 years have witnessed profound changes in practically every country in the world system as well as in the system's structure as a whole. The previous 30 years – from 1914 to 1945 – had been characterized by relative stagnation of the forces of production at a global level, violent confrontation between the imperialist centres seeking to overcome their difficulties by ensuring their hegemony through military means (two world wars), the maintenance of Africa and Asia in the status of colonies or semi-colonies, the success of two major revolutions, the Russian and the Chinese, under the leadership of communist parties. The post-war situation was by contrast characterized by an unprecedented upsurge in economic growth of the capitalist system as a whole (indubitably unchallenged until the decade of the seventies), the elimination of colonial empires and the establishment of nearly 100 new or renewed independent states.

Such a contrast between these two periods corresponding to two successive generations must of necessity call into question the theories of social science. In the 1914–45 period, slump, the violence of the two world wars and the crisis of 1930, the success of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, then the upsurge of the national independence struggles, must imply an agenda of an impasse in capitalist development and maturity for 'socialist revolution'. By contrast, the 30 years of 1950–80 were to show capitalism's unexpected capacity to adapt to the new circumstances and even to benefit from them, its capacity, by way of a broad new upsurge, to regain a legitimacy that would ensure a prospect of stability even more remarkable because the socialist revolutions seemed incapable of offering a plausible alternative.

With the normal time-lag in theoretical reflection on observed reality – time for consciousness of the character of the reality, time for the formulation of theoretical constructs, etc. – the social theory inspired by each of these two successive periods crystallized towards the end of – not at the beginning of or during – the period concerned. Thus 'stagnationist' visions of capitalism, built up during the 1930s (see Keynesianism or the theory of 'blockade' of the colonies by imperialism), became widespread only in the post-second world war period. Visions based on the significance of transformation, growth and development, and their character and prospects (see the 'developmentalist' theories or their critiques highlighting 'dependency'), built up during the 1960s,

became widespread only in the 1970s, when the model of post-war upsurge was already entering a crisis phase.

In any case, for each of the periods considered here, just as for the preceding phases of capitalist expansion since its origins four or five centuries ago, 'development' has been 'unequal', whether in the advanced centres or in the backward peripheries. For the former, any historian can readily identify the periods of rapid advance for some, and stagnation, or decline of others (the contemporary British decline and Japanese advance, for example). For the peripheries, it is the same today as it has been in earlier phases. At no time in history has the whole of the world around or outside the developed capitalist regions constituted a homogeneous and undifferentiated reality. On the one hand – a trite indication – the historical forms of societies, the level of development of their forces of production, the stage of constitution of state forms have always shown a variety that is no greater today than it was four centuries ago. From the advanced tribute-paying states to the tribal societies, there is no less heterogeneity and distance than between Brazil and Rwanda today. On the other hand, in step with their integration into the world capitalist system, the various regions that we have categorized as peripheral have fulfilled diverse specific roles that emphasize their heterogeneity, or their 'level of development' in the routine sense of their superficial 'modernization'. New England, Spanish colonial America, the plantation slavery colonies, Africa that supplied slave labour, the Ottoman Empire and China (after its 'opening up') which were gradually integrated into exchanges centred on Europe, colonized India and Indonesia are no less differentiated and 'unequal' than the Third World of the present.

The 'rediscovery' of this utter commonplace of the current diversity of the Third World, unequal growth rates in the contemporary era and particularly of industrialization, of the variety of roles played in the world system (suppliers of raw materials, of manpower or of manufactured goods, etc.) does not take the reflection far. The use of this commonplace, true of every age, to counter 'the so-called theory of the centre and the periphery', or 'the existence of the Third World' does not respond to any question worth asking.

If, likewise, one wants to make an abstraction from the succession of distinct phases in capitalist expansion and in inequality of development in all its phases and in the system as a whole, some broad general trends that define the capitalist mode may be highlighted. At least three obvious ones: the development of the forces of production, the intensification of 'inter-dependence' (exchanges of all kinds) that we categorize as 'transnationalization' or 'worldwide expansion', the generalization of a certain number of forms characteristic of capitalism (wage labour, urbanization, certain kinds of organization of labour and of ownership of the means of production etc.).

Stressing these general and common trends is an easy matter and of dubious benefit to an understanding of concrete reality and the prospects for the system in question.

For instance, who could deny the development of the forces of production as a whole in the apparently advanced or backward regions? So, saying that

capitalism dooms to stagnation such and such a region (the colonies or the periphery, for example), necessarily runs counter to an essential truth: the constructive dynamic of the capitalist mode of production. But in my opinion no one has seriously argued this. On the contrary, what one might say is that in such and such a phase of capitalism, such and such a region playing such and such a specific role may by virtue of the fact effectively be doomed to temporary stagnation or even decline. This proposition, frequently manifested in history, is very different from the formulation given above, which provides an excuse for those who deny the specificity (and inequality) of the roles by readily putting forward the – abstract – trend towards effective change in the long term.

A one-sided observation on the 'positive' character of the development of the forces of production without a concern for the class character of this development – (in conventional terms 'Development for whom?'), either generally (since it concerns capitalism) or concretely, that is to say in a given phase of capitalist expansion and for a particular region playing particular roles in that expansion – is to make an ideological, non-scientific, choice of accepting capitalism as the long-term means (for centuries, a millenium?) of 'solving the problems of humankind'. One should note another ideological choice that is likewise available: the social contradictions associated with the development of the forces of production permit a response to the problems of societies in the perspective of their future viewed from various angles, according to the outlook of the observer.

The gradual intensification of transnationalization is likewise a commonplace. One might even argue that it tends to wipe out the autonomy of the regions, nations or peoples, constitutive states of the system. But to conclude that political action must submit to its demands since it represents an insurmountable force and it is unrealistic, or utopianly reactionary to reject the consequences, is likewise to make an ideological choice in favour of the 'civilizing influence' of capitalism. It is to make an implicit supposition that this intensified transnationalization operates in the same way and with the same effects on the various components of the system. Nothing could be more wrong than this hypothesis if one admits that the specific roles played by this or that component offer the peoples and social classes profoundly different prospects, again in the horizon of a foreseeable future defining the consciousness and political and social attitudes of the historical subjects.

Observation of the general development of the organizational forms of capitalism does not take one much further. Certainly capitalism does tend to 'homogenize' the world, and talk about the contemporary effects of transnational communication, of 'Americanization' in such or such area of social behaviour, etc., is easy talk for the mass circulation magazines. One must obviously go beyond these mere appearances, since at this level the world can always be seen in the shape of a more or less regular pyramid, where quantitative difference seems the only criterion of grading. If one chooses this or that criterion of classification, an artificial criterion (income per head as modern economic statisticians measure it), or even a partial criterion (level of

industrialization, or the number of telephones per 100 inhabitants, etc.), as there are obvious correlations between most of these criteria, one will discover no more than one already knew: capitalist expansion exists.

For the two real questions, and the genuine difficulties for social science, are outside these trivialities. The two questions are:

First, does quantitative scale of continuing appearance hide qualitative differences? What are the criteria for the latter? Are they of the same character from one phase to another of capitalist history or do they move from one sphere of reality to another? Are the eventual boundaries between the qualitative groups relatively stable or mobile? In particular are there 'intermediate' situations? Do they form the rule or the exception?

Second, does the expansion of the system as a whole entail a tendency to see the more backward regions belatedly reproduce the same type of development as the more advanced regions have previously experienced? Can this trend be 'accelerated', to allow 'overtaking'? Or the reverse, from one phase to another of the history of the system, is it impossible to reduce the types of development of the various segments to the same basic model?

Unfortunately the contemporary debates on 'development theory', useful as they are for a better appreciation of this or that aspect of the problems, are, in our opinion, fairly confused.[1] Perhaps the reason is that the questions posed are not always clearly distinguished. In our opinion, the global critiques addressed to a supposed 'dependency theory', the general anti-Third World declarations of the kind that 'the development of the newly industrializing countries – NICs – demolishes the centre/periphery distinction', etc., do not help to a clear vision. These critiques make their work too easy by inventing an adversary ignorant of the characteristic dynamism of capitalism, and this adversary is easily defeated. By the same token, the difficult issues are removed from the debate.

Answers to these two series of questions seem to us to lie within two families of vision and perspective of capitalist expansion.

What seems the prevailing view is founded on two hypotheses. 1) The mode of capitalist production obeys the economic laws of a decisive power and an extreme force that tend to homogenize the world, that is, to establish the same kind of society everywhere, which calls on the development of the forces of production to the highest degree possible. 2) The backwardness of some in regard to others must be attributed in essence to causes internal to the various historical formations, that is, to their class dynamic, more or less hostile or sympathetic to the emergence and domination of capitalist relations.

Is this general view of capitalist expansion accurate? More precisely, are the fundamental hypotheses on which it is based sufficient? The critique of the prospect of homogenization of the world by capitalism stems from the observation that not only has this not been achieved, even in crude terms, by the five centuries of history of this expansion, but it is also not on the agenda for the foreseeable future. Is not the assertion that this would be impossible made

innocently by those who believe they have perceived that Western levels of consumption cannot be shared by the whole of humankind as there are inadequate resources on the globe? So, saying that the trend to homogenization is the decisive force and that heterogeneity is only transitory must surely take all meaning from the concept of transition, as it refers to a transition that has been coexisting with capitalism since its origins.

One must therefore discuss the character and causes of the permanence of unequal development, on which there are differing views, and not evade the debate by the simple declaration of an abstract tendency for capitalism to spread.

The common ground of the critics of the prevailing view is founded on the hypothesis that the world capitalist system cannot be reduced to a juxtaposition of autonomous 'national' (or local) formations, since the structure and role of these local formations do themselves depend on the structure of the world system and on the play of forces that determine its global evolution. In these circumstances, the dynamic of local formations is not determined exclusively by their internal conflicts. Social classes are not defined exclusively by their position in the local system but – and no less significantly – by their relationship to the range of forces operating on a world scale. The internal forces/external forces distinction is therefore artificial and reductionist: all social forces are internal once the unit of study is the world system and not merely its local components.

Within the framework of this general hypothesis one should situate the concepts of 'centre' and 'periphery' on the basis of which the theory of unequal development in the world system has been built up. An outline of the imbalance that characterizes centre–periphery relations might run as follows: in the centres, the process of accumulation of capital is controlled principally by the dynamic of internal social relations, reinforced by external relations at their disposal; in the peripheries, the process of accumulation of capital is derived principally from the evolution of the centres, grafted and in some way 'dependent' on that evolution. We shall come back to the meaning of this general definition, its content and historical forms.

The real question is whether this division of local formations into 'central' and 'peripheral', which supposes a qualitative distinction, and not merely quantitative differences, makes sense or not. The various responses to this question, posed explicitly here but often implicit, divide the camps. Nobody denies the global 'interdependence' of local formations, or even their inequality within the former. In a general sense, any process of accumulation depends both on the internal dynamic and the external constraints. This is equally true for France, Brazil, Rwanda, regardless of their level of development. It is even true for the most advanced capitalist country that eventually achieves a position of hegemony: accumulation in Great Britain in the 19th century, in the United States nowadays, is not unconnected to the relations these countries enjoy with the rest of the world. The partisans of the vision and perspective under consideration argue that the 'internal decisions'/'external constraints' mixture will be differently proportioned for some and for others: the external

constraint is less burdensome (perhaps) for Japan than for Brazil, for Brazil than for Ghana; but there is no qualitative difference. We revert to the pyramidal image of the world, stratified in successive layers in a continuum that it would be artificial to divide into qualitatively different categories.

There are obvious correlations between the various aspects of 'development'. Thus the pyramidal classification according to levels of income per head for example corresponds, approximately, to the classification of regions and countries according to the degree of external dependence for accumulation and vulnerability to external constraints. As, moreover, the system is characterized by constant dynamism and the growth of its various segments is always unequal, with nations holding varying positions in the pyramid, the conclusion was drawn that the degree of 'external dependence' is itself, and for everyone, relative and variable.

Moreover, the development of the system as a whole entails the ever closer integration of each of its segments, or in other words the degree of transnationalization is accentuated from one phase of history to the other. But this intensification would mean the same for some as for the others, with the result that France, Brazil and Rwanda are to some extent more vulnerable nowadays to global constraints than they were half a century ago.

The theses that reject the view under consideration of a continuum do not only insist upon the 'specificities' of each local formation (nobody denies these). They argue that there really are qualitative differences that entail differing futures in the development of the system as a whole. The character of these qualitative differences will be considered later.

One must recognize this difference of perspective. For the prevailing vision and perspective under consideration implies the recognition of the trend to homogenization, in relative inequality, just as it assigns the position of the various formations in the pyramid structure, itself variable, in the light only of the internal conditions of these formations. By contrast, the theory of unequal development seeks an alternative explanation, in the dynamic of the system as a whole, for the reproduction of inequality from one phase to another. It urges the polarity of the system, that is to say a simultaneous coalescing around one or more central kernels on the one hand, and on the other hand the constitution around this or these kernels of a nebula of satellites that are not 'coalescing'. In other words, 'development' and 'underdevelopment', in the descriptive sense of these vulgarized expressions, are organically linked and constitute the locus and direction of the same worldwide global development. But then one has to show why and how the processes can exist and constantly remain of coalescence on the one hand and disintegration on the other; why the first prevails in some cases and the second in others. One must also take on board the challenge represented by the 'intermediate' situations, that one might provisionally categorize as 'semi-peripheries' and recognize if they form the exception or the rule, if they are 'on the way to becoming central formations' or not, etc.

At this stage and before considering the answers to these questions, one must refrain from crystallizing the positions further. In this area there are not two

'theories', more or less complete and coherent or supposedly such, in opposition. The scientific method, 'the school of thought', does not necessarily lead to such and such a conclusion. Conventional analysis, in terms of neo-classical economics, functional sociology and empirical political science, the structuralist analyses, those of one or more Marxisms (and 'neo-Marxisms') are used by various people and lead to often divergent solutions, whatever the methods of analysis adopted.

It might be added that the logic inherent to neo-classical economics does not encourage one to pose the kind of questions discussed here. Neo-classical economics takes no notice of history and recognizes only the supposedly universal economic laws that take effect with immutable force, bringing an almost inevitable development (that we categorize as capitalist). The backwardness of certain nations in this type of development must therefore be attributed to a refusal – political, ideological or social – to submit to the demands of these universal laws. As one can see, Marxism, accused of being economistic, is infinitely less so than the philosophy of neo-classical economics. This fundamental economism is scarcely extenuated by the explanation of the inequalities and historical backwardness, relegated to disciplines separate from economics: functionalist sociology or empirical political science.

But Marxism itself may give rise to readings that are not entirely different in the conclusions they inspire. The economic laws in question, stripped of their pretensions to universality and revealed as laws of capitalist accumulation, are likewise then regarded as the implacable driving force that leads to homogenization of the world by the development of the forces of production on the basis of generalized capitalist relations of production.

In any case, once this viewpoint is accepted, it would seem idle, or reactionary, to oppose this development, even if capitalist, of the forces of production. Since it would be preparing the objective conditions necessary for the transition to socialism, in the 'economistic' reading of Marxism. Among other factors, resistance to this development in the name of preservation of national autonomy for example would be illusory and in the end negative. A hymn to universality characterizes this view of the expansion of capitalism.

What can one say to counter this view and its theoretical justification, formulated by schools of thought as far apart as the ones enumerated here? Is there a theory – that described as the 'dependency theory' of the 1960s and 1970s, for example – that would take account of the permanence of the reproduction of the centre/periphery imbalance?[2] I do not think one can draw that conclusion. We shall return later to this term 'dependency' which carries all the uncertainties and ambiguities of its common usage. But, apart from the squabbles – of scant interest – over words and labels, the corpus of analyses produced to counter the prevailing view does not constitute a general theory. First because these analyses draw on fundamentally diverse methods: structuralist, Marxist or 'neo-Marxist', sometimes even borrowing from neo-classical economics some of its tools of partial analysis, then because the partial results of these critical analyses lie in various fields, without there always being a concern to integrate them, or may even be contradictory.

The supposed 'dependency theory' in question is no more than a first attempt to reject the prospect of implacable and homogenizing capitalist expansion. The Leninist theory of imperialism was assigned the same critical objective and drew significant conclusions about the political strategy of the struggle for socialism. But here one cannot talk of a single, unique 'theory of imperialism'. Rosa Luxemburg for example argued that capitalist accumulation necessarily implied relations of exchange between capitalist society on the one hand and pre-capitalist social formations on the other. In other words, she concluded that the (fully capitalist) centre and the (incompletely capitalist) periphery formed two sub-groups necessarily associated through all the stages of capitalist expansion. Lenin criticized this analysis at a theoretical level, without denying the actual existence of the relations in question. By contrast, he stressed what seemed new to him, in regard to the formation of monopolies, the export of capital, the colonial division of the world and the conflict of imperialisms. But he left standing an ambiguity on the effects of this evolution at the level of the social and revolutionary prospect. On the one hand, he indicated the relationship existing, in his view, between 'reformism' and the establishment of 'the labour aristocracy'. But on the other hand, he praised a work in which Nikolai Bukharin asserts that imperialism unifies the world labour market and thereby tends to equalize salary levels within the system as a whole. We have drawn attention to this observation that often goes unnoticed.[3]

These analyses of imperialism – in the absence of a (single, unique) theory of it – have, in our opinion, represented a great step forward and not, as is too lightly said now, an error. Certainly these analyses are not made in the abstract, but are part of the actual state of the world system of the time. Is it necessary to repeat that until the aftermath of the Second World War, that is during nearly three quarters of a century, the whole system was fundamentally characterized by this dichotomy of industrialized imperialist centres in conflict over colonial and semi-colonial peripheries, with all its implications? Clearly, as always, some have succumbed to the temptation of eternalizing the historical aspects peculiar to this dichotomy, the colonial status of the peripheries for example, or their restriction to agricultural or mining specialization, or the relative blockade on the development of the forces of production, or even the conflict of imperialisms. But these historical forms of the dichotomy, albeit characteristic of the system from 1880 to 1945, are not those that define it today: the Third World is composed of independent states, industrialization is in train (although unequally), American hegemony has excluded some previous forms of conflict of imperialisms, etc. Is it necessary to reject the validity of the analysis of imperialism to return to the view of a continual and homogenizing expansion of capitalism? Or rather to go further and to see why and how unequal development entered a new phase?

It was attempted with the renewal of analyses in the 1960s and 1970s hastily dubbed 'dependency theory'. Here too, the methods, viewpoints, spheres and phenomena analysed and conclusions reached are too varied for one to be able globally – and idly – to accept or reject this supposed theory that does not exist. The choice of the term 'dependency' was certainly unfortunate and has lent

itself to over-easy enthusiasms or rejections. For worldwide diffusion is characteristic of the system at all stages of its expansion and is even intensified from one phase to another. Accordingly, 'interdependence' and by extension 'unequal interdependence' among unequals, hence 'dependency', are neither new factors, nor clearly defined concepts. With the help of economism, the attempt to measure this 'dependency' by purely statistical means – proportion of external trade in the GDP, source of capital, etc. – has too often drawn the discussion on to ground of limited interest. The expression has had successful moments, notably in Latin America whose literature is better known in Europe and the United States than is the production from other regions of the Third World. This, taken with the success of the structuralist school on that continent, is perhaps the source of the confusion that has allowed critics to deal with a supposed 'dependency theory' as a coherent and complete whole. In Africa and Asia, the expression has been used less crudely, thanks perhaps to a certain classicism of Marxist language, which preferred to use the expressions 'neo-colonial' or 'comprador'.

Once again, whatever the terminology employed, the fields of analyses covered have been broad and the benefits significant. There is no question here of making a survey, however sketchy, of these researches, still less a critical examination. The enumeration is purely to indicate the variety: discussions on unequal exchange and the relations between labour productivity and remuneration, analyses of the agrarian crisis and the migration from the countryside to the towns, analyses of the so-called phenomenon of 'marginalization' (urbanization without adequately intensive industrialization), case studies of so-called 'dependent' industrialization (through ownership of capital, technology or the sources of accumulation) of its relationships to the control of accumulation, and its forms (import substitution, free zones and segmented delocalization, etc.), characterization of the historical formation of the local bourgeoisie and the state and their relations with the classes of earlier epochs and to world capital, etc. In all these fields, the viewpoints and conclusions have rarely been divided. The discussions have been lively and there has been no shortage of serious critiques.

By contrast, it seems almost impossible to take seriously the 'global critiques' that have become fashionable of rejecting out of hand 'dependency theory', the concepts of centres and peripheries, and denying the existence of the Third World, etc. This kind of critique is perhaps only a by-product of the university inflation typical of our time. With the obligation to produce something, certain people, instead of playing an active part in seeking positive answers to the questions posed by the real world, over-specialize perhaps in the easier exercise of the critique. Far too much of this literature filling countless journals is content with vague and spurious accusations: 'dependency theory' neglects concrete analysis (!) or social relations (!!) or the diversity of the Third World (!!!), etc. Sticking to these analytical progressions, our critics are content to fall back purely and simply on to the (highly abstract!) 'theory' of the tendency of capitalist expansion (a reality nobody disputes) to homogenize the world . . .

To take the discussion forward, it may be useful to begin with a definition of the character of the concepts of 'centres' and 'peripheries'.

'Centres' are a product of history. In certain regions of the capitalist system, history has allowed the establishment of a national bourgeois hegemony (we shall explain the meaning of the qualification) and a state that we should also categorize as national capitalist. The bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state are here indivisible: only a so-called 'liberal' ideology could fly in the face of reality and speak of a capitalist economy as an abstraction of the state. For example the decision to raise interest rates, the economic foundation of the American counter-offensive, is a decision of the state and not, as Reagonomics presents it, the spontaneous expression of market forces. The bourgeois state is national when it controls the process of accumulation, admittedly within the limits of external constraints, but only when these constraints are rendered highly relative by virtue of its own capacity to react to their action, or to participate in their creation.

'Peripheries' are defined in purely negative terms: they are the regions that, within the world capitalist system, are not established as centres. Accordingly they are the countries and regions that do not have local control of the process of accumulation, which is therefore mainly shaped by external constraints. The peripheries are not therefore 'stagnant', although their development is not similar to that characteristic of the centres in the successive stages of the global expansion of capitalism. The bourgeoisie and local capital are not necessarily absent from the local political and social scene, and the peripheries are not synonymous with 'pre-capitalist societies'. The state may be absent in the formal sense (the colonial case), but is not necessarily so (today nearly all the countries of the Third World are constituted as independent states). But the existence of the state in the formal sense is not synonymous with the national capitalist state, even if the local bourgeoisie is broadly in control of the apparatus, in so far as it does not control the process of accumulation.

There is no shadow of doubt as to the coexistence within the world capitalist system, at every stage of global development, of 'centres and peripheries', according to this definition. It is easily proven. So the question does not lie with this acknowledgment. The real – and less obvious – question is whether the peripheries are 'on the way to becoming new centres'. More precisely the question is whether the forces operating in the global system are working in this direction, or on the contrary working against it. And hence the changes these forces undergo from one stage to another of the development of the system as a whole.

We shall later go further into the meaning of the expression 'control of accumulation'. It means, we repeat, control by the local bourgeoisie and their state over five essential conditions of the process of accumulation:

– the reproduction of the labour force (this supposes at a first stage that the state policy ensures agricultural development capable of producing surplus foodstuffs in sufficient quantities and at prices compatible with the demands of a return on capital, and at a second stage that the mass production of wage

goods can simultaneously accompany the expansion of capital and that of the wages pool);

– the centralization of the surplus (this supposes not only the formal existence of national financial institutions but also their relative autonomy in relation to the flow of transnational capital), ensuring national capacity to direct its investment;

– the market (largely reserved in fact for national production, even in the absence of heavy tariffs or other protection) and the complementary capacity to be competitive on the world market, at least for selected products;

– natural resources (this supposes, in addition to their formal ownership, the national state's capacity to mine them or to keep them as reserves; in this sense the oil-producing countries do not have such control as they are not in fact free to 'turn off the tap' – even if they should prefer to keep the oil in their sub-soil rather than possess financial resources of which they could at any moment be expropriated.

– lastly, local control of technology in the sense that whether locally engendered or imported it can be rapidly reproduced without indefinite reliance on the importation of essential inputs (equipment, know-how, etc.).

The state and bourgeoisie that control these five elements of social reproduction – and only such – deserve to be described as a national bourgeoisie and state. We note here that this reference to the concept of nation is not without ambiguity. There are social realities other than classes, including nation. But the latter is not alone – family, tribe, ethnic group, religious community, etc. are some of the others – any more than it is to be found everywhere. Its historical form – that of a linguistic and cultural community on which the modern capitalist state is based – is closely tied to the circumstances of European history. We shall turn later to these questions about this historical form. Did it pre-exist the states or is it itself a product of the state? Does it operate as a historical agent, and under what circumstances? Has it become a historical 'necessity' that must reproduce itself, notably in the current Third World? But for want of another term and since the ideology of nation has spread throughout the contemporary world, we are obliged to use this description, even where the social reality underlying the state differs.

The historical establishment of the national bourgeois state is not the rule, but so far the exception in the world capitalist system. The establishment is synonymous with the formation of an 'autocentric national economy', to use the expression we thought it useful to put forward. As can be seen, autocentric economic construction is in no way synonymous with autarky, as still too many commentators appear to think. It merely means that relations with the exterior are subject to the logic of internal accumulation and not the reverse. Moreover, in the case in question, autocentric construction is in no way 'anti-capitalist', still less 'socialist', but on the contrary a fundamental element of the formation of the capitalist system.

The thesis that the centre/periphery contradiction is immanent in the capitalist system leads to a political conclusion. If the formation of a bourgeois national state and the construction of an autocentric capitalist economy are impossible for the periphery, a different path of development is called for. There will be further discussion of the character of this path – the issues of delinking and socialism.

Autocentric formation and development have led effectively to progressive homogenization of society in the capitalist centres. We understand this to mean that the sectoral distributions of the labour force on the one hand and the surplus value on the other tend to approximate. We have illustrated the difference in this for centres and peripheries by showing that in the former the extreme relations between these distributions are on a scale of 1 to 3 while in the latter they are on a scale of more than 1 to 20. Moreover, we show that all the historical evidence suggests that the scale is gradually narrowing for Europe, the United States and Japan, while it is widening for Latin America, Asia and Africa. Another aspect of this qualitative divergence in the structure and trend of its evolution is concerned with income distribution. Not only is this much more unequal in the Third World as a whole than it is in the centres, but it seems too that the prevailing long-term trend in the periphery is the worsening of this inequality, although this is not the case in the centres.[4]

If these factors are correct and significant – and in our opinion they are – then one has to explain why. Contrary to critiques too lightly formulated, the theory of centre/periphery antagonism in no way neglects social classes and class struggles. On the contrary, it explains the facts precisely through the operation of these struggles. For homogenization in the centres is produced, we believe, by the development of internal class alliances that are not exclusively the result of the internal social dynamic but are also made possible by the position occupied in the world system.

Two historical factors have successively contributed to this evolution. In a first stage, the forms of the crystallization of the new hegemonic bourgeois power, through the bourgeois 'revolution' or without it as the case may be, have entailed broad alliances between this new dominant class and other classes: smallholder peasants or landed gentry as the case may be, a trading or artisanal petty bourgeoisie almost always. These alliances were needed to face the threat to social order represented by the emerging working class, at this revolutionary stage, as 19th century European history shows from English Chartism to the Paris Commune. But on the other hand, these forms of bourgeois hegemony have brought social and economic policies initiating the homogenization of society by protecting the income of the intermediate rural and urban strata. In the ensuing phase, beginning towards the end of the last century, and still characteristic of central capitalism today, bourgeois hegemony extends to the stabilized working class. The means by which social consensus is generalized is the association of Fordism as the prevailing form of organization of the mechanized labour process (ensuring mass production) and the social democratic (or Keynesian) wages policy (ensuring an expanding outlet for this mass production). This consensus does not preclude class

struggle; but the struggle tends to be confined to the area of an economic division of the results and to avoid challenging the overall structure of society. This consensus does not only exist, but provides the very foundation that makes possible the operation of electoral democracy as we know it.

The thesis of centre/periphery antagonism argues precisely that the subordinate positions occupied by the peripheries in the world system render unlikely these forms of gradual enlargement of overall social integration. The bourgeoisies who came late on to the scene, and above all after their countries were integrated into the world system, encounter greater difficulties when they try to enlarge their internal class alliances. In a first step, the centre/periphery dichotomy rests on an alliance between dominant central capital and the dominant rural classes of the old kind in the peripheries ('feudal', or large landowners, etc.) The history of Latin America, where independence was won early (at the beginning of the 19th century) by precisely these landowning classes, is still paying the price of this alliance between dominant British capital (whose place has been taken by that of the United States) and landowning oligarchies, the legacy of the international specialization associated with this alliance, marked by the smothering of political democracy and the rise of the bourgeoisie. In Asia and Africa, colonial forms have operated even more brutally in the same direction, emphasizing the backwardness of these two continents in comparison with Latin America. Later, in the contemporary period, when bourgeois states emerging from the national liberation struggles were established and/or local landowners' powers were overturned, an embryo industrialization entered a world system that was unfavourable to the enlargement of the local social base. Fordism here is not accompanied by working-class social democracy. The opening for new industrial production is rather directed to the demand of the expanding middle classes than to working-class consumption. The constraints of modern technology, essential for competitiveness, demand the massive importation of equipment, know-how, and capital that must be paid for by a willingness to pay industrial labour at much lower rates so as to be able to export. Unequal exchange – an expression of these class relations – finds a logical place here.[5] The agrarian crisis inherited from the previous evolution often increases the burden of these constraints.

Some will say that this centre/periphery dichotomy and its effects (the divergent evolution of income distribution, etc.) are merely passing. And that nothing prevents the bourgeoisie in power from overcoming the consequences. Such a judgment is, in our opinion, totally anti-historic. The fact is that the bourgeoisies of the Third World have up to now been unable to overcome them. But one might say that, instead of the bourgeoisie, other (popular) social alliances could do it? This is our thesis. But then the forms needed to do it imply what we call 'delinking' and are part of a problematic that is no longer merely one of capitalist expansion, but rather that of a possible – albeit contradictory – transition towards another (socialist?) society.

The preceding exposition has shown the peripheries in general terms and suggested that the broad common tendencies are characteristic of them as a whole, beyond their evident diversity. Is this generalization legitimate? A reply

to this question entails a close examination of 'intermediate' situations, those of countries that have quickly climbed the steps in the world hierarchy, whether in the past or in our own time. For there certainly are intermediate situations, in society as in nature. One can distinguish the male from the female, the individual in good health from the sick, etc., and these distinctions are meaningful. This does not prevent an examination of intermediate and ambivalent cases often providing a clearer picture of the exact character of the classifications. An examination of the 'semi-peripheries' – to give them a provisional title – will enable one to say in what circumstances and by what means a new bourgeoisie can or could make itself felt, through the construction of a local social hegemony and a bourgeois national state, as a genuine partner in the world system, able to control the process of accumulation and develop the society in a direction that brings it closer to the advanced capitalist societies.

That being so, the history of the constitution of the capitalist centres provides us with a gamut of diverse forms, according to one's standpoint: (revolutionary or reformist) political forms, class alliances and conflicts, appropriateness to the 'national factor' or lack of it, availability of direct colonies or not, types of industry and driving economic activities, (hegemonic or non-hegemonic) strategic position in the world system, etc. One must be careful not to be held to all these specificities, by making for example the West European (notably British and French) model a kind of ideal type in the style of Weber. It remains true that the European model, extended to the United States, has its roots in a history whose cultural dimension cannot be underestimated. These common elements, and Euro-North-American predominance, are such that it is difficult to conceive of 'capitalism' in the abstract, that is independently of this historical 'European' form. In particular the style of the bourgeois class, its fragmentation into 'families' and the competition that rules its behaviour, the relationship of the economy and the bourgeois civil society to the state, and the forms of the latter, are constituents of historical capitalism.

As soon as one leaves the European area to consider the single non-European advanced capitalist country in our modern world – Japan – one perhaps finds forms of operation of the economic and social system that are peculiar to it. In Western capitalism as we know it, the unit of accumulation appears clearly separate from its competitors. In the 19th century it was the family business, and it has become the oligopoly and perhaps the finance group or conglomerate. The state appears as a regulator of competition between these units, and standing above them; but the units retain a broad autonomy in relation to one another and in relation to the state. Is it the same in Japanese capitalism where the constituent families of the ruling class, the industrial–financial oligopolies (the *zaibatsu*) and the renewed states appeared together, less autonomous from each other? In these circumstances, is the unit of accumulation here, as in the West, the business and/or group of businesses, or rather the system as a whole, that is the state? We pose the question without necessarily offering a response.

Can one go further? And say that as a whole the social formations of the

modern world are all equally capitalist, differing only in the historical forms of this mode of production.[6] In this view the centres/peripheries distinction is deprived of any meaningful character. One is back to the quantitative continuum and to the particular specificities of each formation. Some, such as Charles Bettelheim, deny that the societies emerging from the modern communist revolutions (the USSR and China) are anything more than particular forms of capitalism. We feel that abstract generalization goes much too far here and loses sight of the essential differences governing the reality of social and political struggles and their visible prospects in each of the three groups of social formations in our world: advanced central capitalism, peripheral capitalism, the so-called socialist world.

Another cause for thought is the relationship between the autonomy of the central formations and the transnationalization characteristic of the system as a whole. Does not the intensification of the latter call into question the autonomy of the national formations, even the central ones? Is not the current crisis, showing the powerlessness of policies whether (Keynesian) of the left or (monetarist) of the right, a sign that the constraint of worldwide expansion has reached a qualitatively higher level than before? But can one on the basis of this observation wipe out history? Does this new factor make the peripheral formations and those already historically established at the centres 'analogous'? We do not believe so.

The confusion in the debates is doubtless due in part to the fact that the bourgeoisie has become the local hegemonic class throughout the contemporary Third World. This bourgeoisie in power tries effectively to advance its plan of building a national bourgeois state as a partner in the world capitalist system, that is to control the process of accumulation.

But what are the results of this attempt? We have elsewhere put forward an analysis of this bourgeois national plan, formulated by the radical wing of the Third World bourgeoisie on the occasion of the Bandung conference (April 1955).[7] This plan foresaw a possible 'development' through 'inter-dependence' within the world system, and envisaged no way of 'opting out of the system', of 'delinking'. This 'development' was in effect defined by the following elements:

- the desire to develop the forces of production, to diversify production (notably, to industrialize);
- the desire to ensure for the national state direction and control of the process;
- the belief that 'technical' models constitute neutral assumptions that one can reproduce, while controlling them;
- the belief that this process does not demand popular initiative in the first place, but merely popular support for state actions;
- the belief that this process is not fundamentally in contradiction with participation in exchanges within the world system, even if it entails occasional conflict with that system.

Does one need anything more to reveal the bourgeois and national character of this plan?

Without repeating the analysis we put forward of this attempt and its failure, available to the reader elsewhere, we shall briefly recall the main conclusions. First that the circumstances of capitalist expansion in the years 1955–70 have to some extent favoured the establishment of this plan and fed the illusion of its historical possibility. Second that the West has fought this plan with all available economic and political means (including *coups d'état* and military interventions). This hostility cannot be regarded as alien to the fundamental problematic of centre/periphery antagonism. It perfectly illustrates its character and signifies that the system's 'laws' (which cannot be confined to their economic dimension) do not operate in the direction of homogenizing the world on the basis of the generalization of the form of the national bourgeois state, but on the contrary are opposed to the establishment of new centres. Dominant capital is always much more receptive to models of 'subordinate' growth, without local control of accumulation, in other words the neo-colonial state. Third that political support from the Soviet Union to some of these attempts, combined with the revisions to the traditional ideology of the Third International about the socialist transition (among other things, the invention of the pseudo-concept of the 'non-capitalist path') and with the social contradictions and internal limits of the model, explain the ideological confusion that has followed (especially in regard to Third World 'socialisms'). Fourth that the general crisis into which the capitalist world subsequently fell, in the 1970s, has given rise to a counter-offensive by the West, seeking to 'recompradorize' the societies of the Third World, to subject their further development to the logic of the redeployment of transnational capital. This offensive, the principal plank in the strategy of dominant capital in the crisis, successfully exploits the vulnerability of the attempts in question to establish the national state on the periphery of the system. This vulnerability is illustrated in all fields: by debt and the predominance of the worldwide financial system, by the inability of the Third World societies as they are to become partners in the new high technology activities, by the food crisis – reaching famine proportions in some cases – and uncontrolled urbanization, by penetration of the Western model of consumption and conspicuous waste into broad fractions of the middle and even lower classes, by subjection through the spread of communications to the Western pseudo-cultural model, by military vulnerability, etc.

In these circumstances, at the precise moment when critics of 'dependency' are rushing to bury the issue of 'underdevelopment', itself the product of capitalist expansion, is not the comprador form of the state on the periphery on the way to becoming the principal means of unequal integration into the new phase of development of the world capitalist system? This concept of the comprador state, mainly a transmission belt for the dominance of transnational capital, must be contrasted with that of the national bourgeois state, mainly the locus for the regulation of internal class conflicts.

Doubtless the succession of attempts to establish the bourgeois national state, followed by their destruction and compradorization as peripheral societies, is nothing new. On the contrary this succession of events is

characteristic of the history of the periphery from the start. The example of Egypt – with successive attempts and failures by Mohamed Ali, Khedive Ismail, the Wafdist bourgeoisie, Nasserism – is obviously particularly illuminating. But it is certainly not unique, to the degree that some people have thought it possible to associate moments of upsurge and moments of recompradorization into long A and B cycles of global capitalist expansion.

It is clearly understood that the forms of these successive attempts, and of the compradorization that follows their destruction, have evolved from one phase to another of capitalist expansion, in relation to the overall development of the forces of production. For example the prevailing form associated with the 1880–1945 phase is that of colonization, that is the pure and simple negation of the state accompanied by agricultural and mining specialization imposed by the colonial administration. We suggest that the prevailing form being sketched today is that of the semi-industrialized comprador state.

It is necessary here to repeat that compradorization is not imposed by 'external aggression' unrelated to the structures and internal social struggles on the periphery. On the contrary, we have already said that the failure of the Third World bourgeoisie was closely tied to the absence of the broad internal social alliances that have, in the centres, permitted the distribution of the results of the development of the forces of production and by the same token reduced vulnerability to the exterior.

The question is therefore whether the bourgeoisies in the Third World are capable of controlling internal alliances of the kind. We say that the historical circumstances shaped by the global system are totally unfavourable to this. Under these circumstances the plan for the national bourgeois state remains extremely vulnerable. And there is a great temptation to the local bourgeoisie, for want of anything better, to accept that their development be planned for *continuing subordination. We put forward the hypothesis that generally* speaking the bourgeoisies of the Third World are at that point nowadays, have abandoned their national plan in 'the spirit of Bandung', to accept compradorization. This hypothesis obviously demands various concrete analyses.

The theory of centre/periphery antagonism, when seen in this light, goes well beyond discourse on 'dependency'. Once again the ambiguity of the latter term is unhelpful to the discussion. We have already commented that, for example, in our view Canada is not peripheral, albeit clearly 'dependent' on the United States, and would not become so by being dominated by US capital. If Canada *is not peripheral it is precisely because the same social alliances that govern* development in the United States also operate in the Canadian society (Fordism plus Keynesianism, etc.) The contrast here with Mexico is striking. Canada is perhaps a 'province' of the United States–Canada connection, but does not have the character of peripheral capitalism.

It remains to consider two series of complex questions raised by the preceding analysis. The first is about the character of the option available if one rejects compradorization. Could the popular classes, in the absence of the

bourgeoisie, seize the initiative and control an 'alternative' strategy to that of subordinate integration into the world capitalist system? What is the character of this strategy that we call 'delinking'? To what extent does it come within the problematic of the so-called 'socialist transition'? The second question is precisely about the 'semi-peripheries' of the modern world. Are there any exceptions to the rule that the local bourgeoisies are incapable of controlling the crystallization of a bourgeois national state on the basis of a peripheral position in the system? What are the problems these exceptions will face?

If autocentric development, capable of responding to the material needs of all the social strata of the nation, as in the capitalist framework, is seen to be impossible on the periphery of the system, it is necessary to study another option of 'alternative development' considered outside the global constraints. This is the meaning of the expression 'delinking'. But this concept again needs to be defined and explained, as crude usage has obscured its meaning.

'Autocentric development' has a precise meaning, namely national control of accumulation as we have defined it above. A reminder is necessary since the literature – and notably that of the numerous critiques of the centre/periphery theory – often with disturbing readiness confuses this concept with pseudo-concepts describing economic policies of so-called development in use here and there. For example, there is a confusion of autocentric development with industrialization strategy by import substitution, on the pretext that the latter, in opposition to export-led strategy (taking exports as the driving force for growth), finds its expansion in enlargement of the internal market. One does not ask if the strategy of import substitution in question comes within an attempt to control accumulation or if it accepts a degree of financial (or direct ownership by foreign capital), technological 'dependency', etc., such that the dynamic of accumulation escapes the local state (as in the majority of cases: Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, etc.). One also does not raise the question of the internal class alliances on which the industrialization in question is based, nor consequently whether the expanding internal market is that of the mass of the people or the middle strata (as in the range of experiences of industrialization in Latin America and the Arab world).

Undoubtedly, as we have already said, the 'autocentric strategy' is not 'anti-capitalist', since it corresponds to the content of central development. *A fortiori* a strategy of development of the forces of production in the people's interests, in a socialist perspective or an experience of delinking, can only be autocentric.

Delinking is not synonymous with autocentric development. It indicates another phenomenon: a demand imposed by the system. It is the condition for autocentric development, on the basis of a legacy of peripheral capitalism. Here again it is useful to recall that the expression has been misused as a synonym for many things, such as autarky, or the cultural retreat to obsolete utopias, which have nothing to do with the concept put forward.

We shall deal later with the exact content of this concept. In a word, it deals with a principle: that of 'delinking' the criteria of rationality of internal

economic choices from those governing the world system. These criteria are only the expression of the law of value governing a socio-economic system. We have argued that the world capitalist system as a whole – centres and peripheries included – was governed by the same law of value that we categorize as 'world capitalist'. This reality is expressed in common parlance (by the World Bank for example) in relation to 'comparative advantage' (between local production or export and import) or to 'profitability' (calculated on the basis of 'world prices', etc.). We have argued that adoption of these criteria of economic rationality led by force of circumstance to reproduction of inequalities (here centre/periphery) in development, with all their political and social consequences. We have therefore proposed that one should define the criteria of economic rationality on the basis of constraints and social relations internal to the nation. We believe moreover that this proposal is in no sense utopian, and could not be since it rationalizes the effective practice of socialist societies (or supposedly such) which have effectively 'delinked' and are, to say the least, parties to a plan for a new, 'socialist', society, integrating the mass of the people, even if they are diverted from it in their actual evolution.

The latter observation obliges us to consider that the problematic of socialist transition is truly at the heart of the matter. For if the bourgeoisie is incapable of 'delinking', and if only a popular alliance can and should be persuaded that delinking is an ineluctable necessity, the social dynamic must lead to aligning the people's plan into a perspective for which we find no other description than socialist. It being understood that the socialism in question remains a plan for society, largely ahead of us, and not a reality already achieved – here and there – that needed only to be copied.

Is there any other choice for the contemporary Third World? The alternatives, in fact, seem highly dramatic today: delinking or adjustment? 'Adjustment' to the demands of the world system is not even always possible. Perhaps it is for some 'semi-peripheries' to which one will return, at the cost clearly of great wretchedness and great suffering for whole swathes of society, perhaps the majority. But for the rest – those who constitute what one nowadays calls the fourth world – adjustment is perhaps merely to agree to perish, sometimes in the literal sense of the word, as the famine shows. It is still the case that the historical conjuncture can lead some societies to show themselves incapable on their own of escaping from their impasse. 'Collective suicide' has been seen in history, and no false optimism justifies one in forgetting it. The retreat to obsolete utopias, fuelled by a cultural nationalism that has the wind in its sails, represents for us a choice of this kind. Delinking, brought within a socialist perspective, remains the only acceptable answer to the challenges of our time.

In returning to the characteristics of autocentric development (national control of accumulation permitting in turn a homogenization of the society), we cannot fail to notice that the socialist experiences (or the so-called such) of the Soviet Union and China likewise meet these criteria. The development of the forces of production in these two experiences, as in that of other socialist countries of

Marxist–Communist leadership (Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia and Albania, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba), always operated within the framework of an overall national strategy, planned and autocentric in the full meaning of the word. One can – and must – discuss the social character of this development (socialist or not, reproducing class relations or tending to make them disappear, etc.), the relative importance of the results achieved in terms of development of the forces of production, relative success or failure of the planning aspirations for control of development, the character of the difficulties encountered and the contradictions characterizing the system (impasse or temporary difficulties, etc.); one cannot deny its autocentric character, in the sense in which we have defined the term.

There is a striking contrast between this success – from this point of view – and the failure of the experiences of development of the capitalist Third World. The latter countries with or without strong growth according to the case, with a greater or lesser degree of state intervention and socialist aims, do not seem to have been able so far to achieve an autocentric development of the forces of production accompanied by social homogenization and strengthened local autonomy in regard to the global system (one will return later to the supposedly doubtful cases of the contemporary 'semi-peripheries').

Must the experiences of the communist world be regarded as successes from the nationalist standpoint, but failures as attempts to create a classless 'new society'? Whether one likes it or not, an explicit mention must be made of the sense given to the socialist plan. It is clearly understood that the official discourse of the regimes in question does not raise doubts about this supposedly socialist character: the suppression of private ownership of the essential means of production, for the benefit of state and co-operative ownership, is regarded as synonymous with socialism and the abolition of class exploitation. Obviously the social and political reality requires a critique of this reduction of the concept of socialism. If one refers to Marx – and one has the right to do so here as it concerns social systems that do officially refer to Marxism – socialism means much more. It cannot be defined exclusively in negative terms: abolition of private ownership of the means of production. Its positive content implies the genuine social control of their use and control over social destiny (development of the forces of production) by the workers themselves. This control is unthinkable without a political democracy more advanced than the constantly limited democracy of advanced capitalist societies. If it were not so – and it is the case – the question of the social character of the system remains. Moreover Lenin and Mao Zedong were not content with the bald rhetoric of the prevailing discourse of 'socialist' power. The former and the latter raised precisely this issue of socialist reality and, each in his own way, analysed his society in terms of struggles between socialist forces and capitalist forces. Considering the case of the USSR, Mao and the Maoists concluded at a certain moment that it was the capitalists who had won, after Stalin's death (according to them). We place the defeat of the socialist forces (without thereby drawing a conclusion as to the capitalist character of the winning antagonists) much earlier: at the origins of the Stalinist system

itself, the forced collectivization of the 1930s, bringing a rupture of the popular alliance and the constitution of a new despotic state. In regard to China, Mao was not far from concluding on the eve of the launching of the cultural revolution, that 'capitalist' forces were on the way to winning. The total rejection of the cultural revolution by Mao's successors could lead to the understanding that the logical conclusion was that capitalist forces had won here too. This is not our judgement at all. On the one hand we regard it as erroneous to describe as 'capitalist' the anti-socialist forces in the two cases (Soviet and Chinese). On the other hand, we believe that nothing like 'forced collectivization' bringing the constitution of a despotic state was carried out in China, and that, by virtue of this, the relations between the state and the mass of the people (with peasants obviously included) are of a different nature from those characteristic of Stalinism.

The complex questions of the character of the so-called socialist societies, of the character of their crises (or their impasses), of their relations with the capitalist world, of their possible evolutions, cannot be determined by a negative description ('non-socialist societies'), or positive, but one-sided and one-dimensional, ('capitalist' societies, albeit under specific forms), or indefinite and vague ('statist' societies, or 'new society of classes'), to embrace all these societies (Soviet, Yugoslavian, Albanian, Hungarian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban, etc.).

Undoubtedly these societies do present a certain number of significant common traits largely as a result of twin factors. The first, objective, is that these regimes emerged from popular revolutions in backward countries (largely rural, semi-peripheral or frankly 'peripheralized' in the world capitalist system), and therefore faced the double task of rapid development of the forces of production and of carrying out a number of tasks historically accomplished elsewhere by capitalist development itself. The second common factor is that these people's revolutions have been led by communist parties emerging from the Leninist–Bolshevik tradition. This has carried with it a range of concepts as to state–class and avant-garde/avant-garde party/people relations, in other words a range of concepts as to political organization (democracy, etc.) that are highly specific. What is important here is not so much to classify them (as 'true' or 'deviationist' Marxists), or to judge them from an ideological, or moral, standpoint, but to grasp the genesis on the basis of the ideas prevailing in the labour movement at its origins (namely in the Second International), the extent, the historical limits and new contradictions they have entailed in the societies whose reconstruction they have inspired.

This common heritage has bequeathed problems that are far from being settled. In our view it is these political problems that are now the main obstacle to development of the forces of production. In other words, this crisis can be considered in its economic aspect. It is a question in fact of systems that have achieved a powerful development of the forces of production on a broad basis (massive shift of the labour force from agriculture to industry, models of industrial technology largely borrowed from the capitalist West) by means of administrative planning, having relegated market mechanisms to a minor role.

and which, today, are up against the difficulties of moving to intensive accumulation, which implies more sensitive and effective incentives for higher productivity. Will this objectively necessary change be made or not? Will it be made by means of 'restoration of capitalism' (or its establishment, if one regards it as only embryonic here before the revolution), or by the development of new relations of production creating the conditions for genuine social control by the workers (the very definition of socialism)?

This question of the evolution of the purported socialist systems remains an open one in our view. Doubtless some people think it has been answered already, whether as societies that have become 'capitalist', or because a new 'statist' mode of production has already been established there. The first theory – systematized by Charles Bettelheim for example – is, in our view, abstract and simplistic, since it reduces the content of capitalism to mere wage-earning. But we think it requires more: parcelling out of ownership of capital, bringing with it 'competition', in turn the foundation of economic alienation that is essential to the working of capitalism. Furthermore, the market (or pseudo-market) form that the competition of capitals demands, has not (not yet?) spread to a single one of these social formations. The second theory (the 'statist' mode of production) retains the advantage of not reducing the new reality to historical capitalism. But it may be the object of a hasty and unjustified generalization to which we shall return.

In any case it is impossible to take the discussion deeper if one clings to the common overall characteristics of these systems. On the contrary, one must take the measure of their concrete, sometimes divergent, history. Each of these revolutions, in the historical circumstances of its development, has brought what seem to us three distinct tendencies together in a complex, contradictory manner (of changing weight from one phase to another of the development):

- a socialist tendency, expression of the popular content of the social forces organized in the struggle against capitalism, whose reality and persistence cannot be denied by the mere denunciation of the hollow character of the 'socialist rhetoric' of power (though this should be done);
- a statist tendency corresponding to the constitution of new social forces, dominant or aspiring to dominate, to which one will return;
- a capitalist tendency, expression of the objective forces associated with the development of the forces of production.

The true history of each of these cases under examination thus shows how these tendencies have come together differently.

The Russian revolution, which inaugurates this history, lays the basis for a worker and peasant popular alliance that constituted the effective foundation of Soviet power right up to the collectivization of the 1930s. The latter, imposed with violence on a refractory peasantry, put an end to the popular content of power and founded the despotic state, whose primary aim is to ensure the super-exploitation of the peasantry in order to pay for industrialization reproducing the Fordist forms of exploitation of the labour of the new working class, largely constituted by the migration of impoverished peasants. This state

becomes the mould in which is cast a new dominant class which takes on a statist form not merely dominant but almost exclusive. For the rest, extensive accumulation is now achieved and for that reason the peasant issue has lost its original importance (the peasantry itself representing no more than a minority to which, moreover, substantial concessions have been made from the mid-1950s). But the question of moving to intensive accumulation has not been answered. The new class in power seems itself to be divided over the ways to make this move. Some – symbolized no doubt by Khruschevism – propose a decentralized statism for the benefit of technocracy whose most genuine representatives they probably are (and technocratic solutions linked with this proposal: strengthening of the market role, 'consumerism' and depoliticization of the masses, etc.). Others retreat into bureaucratic conservatism (Brezhnevism) flavoured perhaps with a reformism more liberal than democratic, or an attempt to revive political and ideological life (notably of the Party), that reflects the persistence of the tendency to socialism (beyond the doubtful rhetoric of the system), but is tricky in the light of the historical legacy and the challenges of Western aggressiveness.

The combination of the three tendencies outlined is much less unbalanced in favour of the statist impasse in China. First because nothing has been done here comparable with Stalinist collectivization and industrialization; the state – doubtless bureaucratic and scarcely democratic – has neither turned into a despotic machine virtually impervious to popular pressure, nor the sole locus of establishment of driving 'avant-gardes': the aspirations to power of the popular base, encouraged by Maoism, on the one hand, and those of the new capitalist entrepreneurs, strengthened by the current line, on the other, provide alternative poles of attraction. The combination here, we believe, brings together a still live socialist tendency, a national capitalist tendency and a statist tendency, able to maintain its dominance under the circumstances of a capitalism–socialism internal conflict. In these circumstances too, it is, we believe, out of the question that the capitalist tendency can win acceptance for a 'comprador' perspective, similar to that imperialism can envisage imposing on the capitalist Third World. It is a question then of a national capitalist tendency. Moreover, given that here the phase of extensive accumulation is far from being achieved, the peasant and worker popular base, less fragmented than in the USSR, reinforces, within the internal struggles in the dominant statism, the tendency for progress in the popular and democratic political and ideological life and weakens the option for a realignment around the statist technocracy–national capitalism couplet.

This kind of combination occurs again, but more amenable to a potentially favourable evolution, in Yugoslavia or in Hungary, at a higher level of development (as the phase of extensive accumulation is already past), but operating under more severe external constraints (small country, Western infiltration into Yugoslavia, Soviet presence in Hungary). An evolution that, in China, followed on this basis and permitted the continuing strong development of the forces of production, would, in our view, offer the best long-term hope for the forces of socialism. But one also finds in the world of so-called 'genuine'

socialism, examples of negative involution. The most tragic cases are perhaps those of Czechoslovakia (blocked by Soviet fears), Romania (blocked by its primitive statism). Poland (seduced by the attractions of the West). or Vietnam (unable even to begin extensive accumulation. and where military statism tends to be perpetuated on the sole basis of nationalism and regional expansionism).

It is not. we think, a case of merging all these differences into a grey concept of generalized statism.

Doubtless. from the point of view of national construction. that is reinforcement of its capacity to assert itself as an autonomous reality in our world, the experiences of the USSR and Yugoslavia (despite the unresolved nationality issues), and of China and Hungary are positive. Contrarily. in the 'socialist' societies. locked into impasses from which they can seem to find no escape. the national achievements are themselves vulnerable.

Without doubt the point of view that attributes a positive character to the achievement of national aims is far from being shared. The Marxist vulgate. precisely because it denies the pertinence of centres–peripheries polarization. judges 'nationalism' as totally negative. This position pairs up with that of world capitalism as in its transnational expansion it comes up against 'national' barriers. The community of views expressed for example by Bill Warren and his school – under a Marxist cloak – and by the World Bank is evidence of this.

We come back once more to the inevitable question of statism.

Marxism has based its conception of human liberation on the double abolition of value – expressed in the economic alienation immanent in the capitalist mode. with economic laws operating as laws of nature – and of the state – an expression in this system of dominance of the bourgeoisie and its ideology. Marx. however, aware of the dangers of utopian temptation. refrained from specifying the modalities of operation of an advanced society freed of this double constraint. The societies of existing socialism. as it is called, are, however, to say the least. far from providing satisfactory responses to these questions. The expropriation of capitalists for the benefit of state property and planning – such as it is – to replace the market have not ensured genuine control for the workers and social control of development. At the same time. the state has not only survived but has done so in strengthened autocratic or bureaucratic forms. One knows the – formalist – justifications that the powers in question have made. Our analyses have. we hope. led us to be less complaisant. Statism is here a necessary dimension of the long transition initiated by the supersession of capitalism in the circumstances imposed by the most basic objective reality: unequal development of capitalism and its essential supersession beginning from the peripheries of the global system. In addition, the complex and contradictory character of the post-capitalist societies is ineluctable, and statism is one of their dimensions. Its preponderance in the Soviet system has, we believe, particular historical reasons. Is it then a question of a new social system of classes rather than a form of capitalism? Is this system stabilized? In transition? Or at an impasse? Is it capable of socialist evolution? We have raised these questions elsewhere and

believe they are still open.

It is still the case that the necessary and probable rejection of capitalist expansion such as it can only be at the periphery of the system creates the necessary conditions for history to follow in the way it has begun since 1917. It is in this sense that, for us, delinking by 'scraps' detaching themselves from the system of the global rationality of capitalist expansion will always remain the first chapter of a long evolution governed by the internal conflict of the socialist, national capitalist and statist tendencies. To reject it in the name of 'absolute values' whose immediate achievement one demanded, is to condemn oneself to desperate impotence. One must place the battle within the context of reality, if one wants to change that reality and not merely observe it and analyse its evolutions post mortem. To accept it is also to understand that control of social destiny cannot be achieved at a stroke, with the wave of a magic wand. This control will therefore remain limited and relative, and we do not yet know what lies ahead of us – the human society freed of economism and the state. Furthermore, this liberation cannot be conceived as an absolute metaphysical entity. The distinction we put forward between the levels of social alienation and anthropological alienation has precisely the aim of relativizing the concepts of 'transparency of social relations', of 'de-alienation' and of 'social control of destiny'.[8]

One of the inevitable dimensions of history present and to come, at least in the foreseeable future, is that of the nation-state. For if the supersession of capital cannot be done at a stroke, then the 'countries' where it comes under challenge remain inserted in the constellation of the world system of states. This argument has been advanced by the so-called socialist powers to justify the state and reasons of state. The manipulation, evident here, should nevertheless not make one forget the real constraint of the global system. It is clearly understood that the 'national' content of supposedly such of the states in question, must itself be examined in a critical manner. We deal elsewhere with the historical analysis of this particular social reality, not placed 'above classes' but smack alongside them, as with the other social realities (for example gender division).[9] Denying these realities always ends up in justifying in fact the real oppressions that are always and definitively articulated on the exploitation of labour. To put them aside by refusing to integrate them in the real social ensemble always ends up in weakening the potential transforming force. It is also clearly understood that the true content of this so-called national reality must be specified and analysed, relativized by a distancing in regard to the ideology of the nation-state and its transfer, like so many other elements of the dominant ideology at the world scale, from European history to that of all human societies.

The objective reality – even necessity – of the state and the national dimension is ineluctable. Doubtless it is legitimate, desirable, and even crucial, to avoid losing sight of the distant objective of liberation and of abolition of the state and the nation, without thereby necessarily falling into utopian fantasy and believing it possible to describe the humankind of the future 'without nations'. Experience has shown that, in this kind of exercise, one usually

remains prisoner to a mechanical projection of the conventional view of the contemporary West which, like all societies, has great difficulty in self-relativization and self-criticism; or one falls into the glib assertion of the (positive) persistence 'of the difference', without really being able to situate its significance. Let us admit that we do not know what a liberated and diverse humankind will be like, without this – necessarily contradictory – diversity engendering antagonistic conflict.

These real objective demands of the state and of the autonomy of the nation in the global system are precisely the subject of an ideological rejection widespread in the contemporary West. The almost psychological explanation of this factor seems fairly obvious: disappointment aroused by the distance between the rhetoric of the so-called socialist power and the reality, the feeling of powerlessness to act in the developed West to influence its evolution significantly, the luxury that makes possible in the rich central societies the juxtaposition of generous statements and selfish compromises, etc. In addition in the current phase, the ideological offensive of the right has managed to place objectively in its camp the phraseology of this kind of apparently 'left' critique.

In effect this phraseology may be summarized in the following four propositions

– The East – and even the Easts (Russia, China, Yugoslavia and others likewise) – which is not 'socialist', is at an impasse.
– Nationalism is in itself and always the expression of anti-socialist forces.
– The state is always and everywhere the enemy of the people.
– The field of battle must be transferred, for reasons obeying the preceding propositions, to the domain of struggles for democracy.

If it is not possible here to go into the detail of these confused arguments, we must at least situate our contrasting propositions.

First, the proposition according to which the East is 'blocked' deserves more reflection. Is it more so than the West, enmeshed in economistic consensus to the point that left and right, such as they are, have here lost any historical relevance? And if Soviet society seems today to encounter fairly strong barriers to change (but after it has managed to solve some problems, has become the second superpower, has – relatively speaking – maintained a pluri-national unity that no Western colonialism has ever been able to envisage, etc.), China, Yugoslavia or Hungary with apparently less difficulty overcome these supposedly absolute 'blocks'.

The anti-statism seems to us often superficial in its method and if truth be told hardly scientific. There is often confusion between state and (administrative) apparatus, noisy complaints of excessive taxes and income redistribution by the state to the extent of 60 per cent of income, topped up with a dash of ready satire on bureaucracy in Georges Courteline style, etc. One deduces from this that the state is necessarily oppressive. One forgets that, in the real economic class struggle, even in the West, state protection has appeared to be, and even become, the effective means of defending the weak. The Reaganite ideology is not mistaken, in its generalized attack on the welfare state. The

proposals put forward to 'limit' the state and roll back its powers often, in our opinion, overlook that Western democracy itself has entailed its strengthening. And have not a number of experiences of 'decentralization' shown the retreat of genuine democracy, a victim of the bias of the combined influence of reactionary local forces and depoliticization following the loss of the overall dimension essential to political consciousness? Going further into the vision of the problems of the future: can one imagine social control at a high level of development of the forces of production without a complex organization (hence 'bureaucratic' apparatuses)? Can one at the same time desire social solidarity on the scale of millions of individuals, efficient modern technology, and conceive of overall social control only by means of 'autonomous small collectives' at the grass roots? The articulation of the free activity of individuals, great and small collectives will doubtless demand systems infinitely more complex than those imagined by the neo-libertarian utopias of our time.

Once one empties the genuine dialectic of the state and civil society to substitute a metaphysical opposition of one to the other, one easily falls into neo-liberal discourse on democracy. One forgets the Marxist critique, justified in our view, according to which genuine democracy is not restricted to freedom, or freedoms. The latter are a necessary element, but in no way sufficient.

This critique of anti-statism on all counts does not exclude a reflection on the statist consequences of the tendencies to accumulation of capital. The latter operates in the direction of a growing centralization of capital that leads to a gigantic organization. When the latter, in the logic of capitalism, retains a private form, it presents all the 'disadvantages' of statism (bureaucracy, etc.) without the advantage of political transparency. Moreover the contradiction inherent in the capitalist mode of production – namely the tendency for productive capacities to expand beyond what society's capacity to consume permits – can be overcome only if, alongside Department I (production of the means of production) and II (production of consumer goods), there is developed a Department III of absorption of the surplus, of which the state is a natural protagonist in the form of social and/or military expenditures.[10] Overall these tendencies of accumulation of capital mean that socialism is objectively necessary here, although for other reasons than those that also make it necessary at the periphery of the system.

By this token, the base unit of accumulation tends to burst out, to impose itself beyond the boundaries of the firm or financial group, to identify, through the state, with the entire social formation. Japanese capitalism in this evolution enjoys perhaps a particular advantage, from the fact that from the outset, for reasons relating to its historical, ideological and political structure, the state has further unified the elementary units of áccumulation. But the same tendencies should operate elsewhere in the same direction of evolution, despite the handicaps represented, in historical Western capitalism, by the ideology of the 'private–public' contrast. If, despite the objective maturity of socialist supersession, this does not pave a way, for political reasons relating to the attenuation of social conflicts and socialist consciousness in the developed

centres, then capitalism itself will evolve towards statism. This deserves the description as capitalist and thereby to be distinguished from the statism of the contradictory transition.

The preceding exposition is based on the fundamental thesis of the division of the world capitalist system into centres and peripheries, opposed and complementary in an asymmetrical relationship inherent to capitalist expansion. It follows from this thesis that the supersession of capitalism begins necessarily from the crises of the periphery, by means of their 'delinking'.

The thesis says no more than that. For it in no way denies the diversity of the peripheries, nor the quest for capitalist expansion. The concept of periphery is defined, as we have said, in negative terms: the regions that are not established as autocentric national bourgeois centres. By this token, diversity is the rule here, as much in the past as in the present. Such diversity is naturally laden with consequences. The concrete objective conditions for the delinking essential to overcome peripheral status are neither identical nor of equal extent in this or that situation, in the various phases of the global expansion of capitalism. Delinking, like any radical qualitative change, is always difficult, and therefore comes as the exception, a response to those situations of exceptional crisis. By contrast, adjustment is the rule, that is, an attempt to remain within the system.

The 'adjustment or delinking' debate suffers, we feel, from a confusion of levels of analysis. The opposing choice in principle, of 'adjustment or delinking', is closely associated in our analysis with the opposition of 'capitalism or socialism', likewise in principle. This unavoidable association is the result of actual historical conditions where the latter opposition operates: the impossibility (in the sense that the question is not on the agenda of actual social forces) of the socialist option in the developed centres on the one hand, and the objective necessity of this option if one wishes to escape the tragic consequences of capitalist development, as it is and can only be, at the periphery of the system. But, concretely, delinking (and behind it socialism) is not equally probable or even possible, randomly and at any given moment throughout the periphery. We will note therefore that the peripheral societies all try at first to 'adjust', that they do not do so as passive subjects 'shaped' from outside but as active historical actors whose action is one ingredient in the dynamic of the global system.

Critique – in the fashion of the day – of the analysis in 'centres–peripheries' terms overlooks that it in no way neglects the active behaviour of states and social classes (especially the dominant) at the periphery. But the analysis raises doubts as to their intention – and will – of achieving the objectives they propose, if these objectives really are 'development' in the image it has in the centres, in all its dimensions and with all its social consequences (homogenization of the society, a broad consensus flowing from it, etc.).

Evidently the dynamic of social classes is the motor of change here – at the periphery – just as it is there – at the centre. The question then is not one of artificially contrasting a method based on recognition of this general evidence with a view that would ignore it to retain only 'external' and 'global'

determinants. This means of being rid of the problem is too easy to be acceptable. One has still to explain why social classes in this or that situation are what they are, and on this basis, to understand the objective reasons that take account of the respective plans, the successes and failures of struggles, and the actions taken to put them into effect. We believe that it is impossible to understand what the social classes in this or that situation are, the character of their plans and strategies, without situating them in the global system. The relation between the local structure of social classes and the global system is not one-sided in the sense that the autonomous dynamic of the local classes shapes the system; for, in turn, the system structures the local classes. Is it possible in these circumstances for imbalance in the system to be overcome by the autonomous dynamic of the local classes? Yes, in principle, say the critics of our thesis. No, in principle, history replies to them. For if so the 'end of peripheries' would have been declared as possible and even imminent four centuries ago at the dawn of capitalism. Marx foresaw it for India more than a century ago, and it has been denied. We might also declare it today as possible and imminent – as critics of our thesis do – with exactly the same arguments.

The real, concrete examination of the dynamic of change at both local and global level, and the modifications in the world hierarchy that result, is the only way to overcome the contradiction and answer the question: why has what is possible 'in principle' not 'in fact' occurred?

Which societies, through the history of capitalism, have managed to constitute themselves as 'fully developed' centres (in the visible and immediate meaning of the term)? Have they done so from the starting point of a peripheral situation (that is, not external to the capitalist system, but occupying a subordinate position within it), but showing themselves capable through intelligence and will (of the state, of the dominant classes) to 'take selective advantage' of the opportunities offered by the market and, by a systematic and active strategy, to hoist themselves from 'subordinate development' to 'autonomous development'? Are possibilities of this kind in sight today for some societies in the Third World?

The expression 'semi-peripheries', used to describe 'intermediate' situations leading to the constitution of capitalist development in the style it has in the most advanced regions of the system, runs the risk of reducing to a single model two series of phenomena that we believe to be distinct: the gradual constitution of centres on the basis of non-peripheral situations on the one hand, and the attempts to overcome the condition of peripheral capitalism on the other.

It is clearly understood that the capitalist system was not constituted overnight, by the wave of a magic wand. Capitalist formations are of necessity constituted on the basis of internal transformation of the previous historical formations. Faced with this problem, one can therefore adopt a purely pragmatic approach and refuse to go beyond that to a case by case examination, with each case being studied in all its singularity. But is it forbidden to hope to understand more? Is it forbidden to seek to identify, as well as the singularities, the principal forces that have allowed some to swing over to the group of advanced poles, while they kept others in what it is

convenient to describe under the label of 'under-development'?

It seems to us that as soon as one tries this operation one is bound to see the essential differences that separate the cases of central and eastern Europe, Japan and North America on one side, from those of Latin America, the Ottoman Orient, India, China, Africa and South-East Asia on the other. Central and eastern Europe has never been peripheralized; it is organized in states and empires that constitute autonomous and even substantial political partners of the European system; it will recover from its economic and social backwardness by internal transformations broadly determined by the dynamic of its own classes. The external world, that is the advanced capitalist system, appears to offer these states and empires a challenge, but it is not a matter of a direct constraint strong enough to be decisive. America, on the other hand, is a fabrication of mercantilist Europe, peripheral from the outset for the roles it played, in the precise meaning we have given the concept (not 'weak development of the forces of production' but 'subjection of internal accumulation to the aims of accumulation in the centres dominating the system as a whole'). It is not without substance to note here that the most developed regions in this peripheral system (the slave colonies and the Indian populated regions subjected to mining exploitation then to the hacienda system) have not up to now managed to hoist themselves into the ranks of modern developed countries, while those left hanging, by-product of European emigration (New England), constituted a centre that was destined to become the most powerful in today's world.[11] Furthermore, our thesis also posits that the conditions for a capitalist maturity were met in the 16th to 17th centuries in the Ottoman Empire (Rumelia and Egypt), in India, and in China, its backwardness being purely relative and due, moreover, to more advanced forms of the tribute-paying mode of production, in comparison with European and Japanese feudalism. But the domination that the European West was to exercise over these societies, far from reinforcing the elements favourable to a speedy capitalist evolution, would weaken them (destruction of Indian industry, imposition of unequal exchange, colonization and destruction of statist autonomy, etc.). Japan, which escaped this domination, rapidly constituted a new centre, precisely because it had never been peripheralized.

Did the independence of Asia and Africa, regained after the Second World War, put an end to the action of these external constraints and re-establish the predominance – virtual exclusivity – of the internal class dynamic? The acceleration of unequal development within the Third World in the post-war period, the appearance of new 'semi-industrialized' countries, gave force to the thesis of 'semi-peripheries' capable of constituting themselves into new centres, and also justified the thesis of exclusivity of internal social relations and state strategies. A closer examination is in our view necessary before this conclusion can be drawn.

Latin America must in fact give one pause. It was constituted from the start as periphery, the main one of the time, not in the least 'blocked', as the critics of our thesis understand it, but on the contrary undergoing a development of the forces of production superior to that of regions peripheralized later or less

intensively. It won its political independence very early, at the start of the 19th century, when the mercantilist system in crisis gave way to the industrial system. It entered the era of industrialization earlier than Asia and Africa – colonial until the 1950s and 1960s – and rapidly reached a more substantial 'semi-industrialized' stage in its principal states (Brazil, Mexico, etc.). Is it now on the way to constituting new centres, once more in the precise meaning we give the term (social homogenization, that is Fordism plus welfare state and a pronounced relative autonomy in the world system)?

Analysis of the character and structure of the classes and their dynamic throws doubt on the future of the Latin American continent. First let us not forget the past too quickly. Early independence, snatched by the dominant class of the mercantilist era, far from attenuating the burden of external constraints, was on the contrary to increase them by renewing them: the dominant landowning–industrial capital alliance (British then North American) has to our day continued peripheralization in the new industrial phase. Industrialization, being very recent, has not, as in the early centres, created a historically constituted working class as a numerically significant and organizationally autonomous social force. These two factors together determine a kind of industrialization that, far from homogenizing society, is based on increasing internal polarization, as the 'Brazilian miracle' illustrates to perfection. The specificity of the class structure that results – numerical predominance of 'marginals', poor peasants, middle strata enriching themselves with rapid growth, etc. – is inseparable from the historical forms of integration in the world system. It reproduces, with changes, some essential aspects: the comprador approach of the local bourgeoisie and its state firmly preferring a subordinate position in the world system to the risks of confrontation. Is external debt, whose cancerous growth was in no way foreseen by the rhapsodists of industrialization, not a brutal reminder of the domination of the new transnational financial capital and the pusillanimity of the local bourgeoisies?

In these circumstances it seems fairly evident that a development of the forces of production spreading its impact throughout society (and this characteristic defines what capitalism has in effect achieved in its centres) cannot be achieved in the framework of a local bourgeois hegemony. People's power, delinking, opening to socialist transition (with all its contradictions) are therefore closely linked and objectively necessary. But this option is not thereby automatically added to the agenda. On the contrary, perhaps since this continent is more 'developed', the scope for possible adjustment, still within an overall peripheralized but renewed structure, is greater here. This prospect, perhaps the most likely, is not one of 'semi-peripheries' on the way to constituting new centres; it is a renewal of the peripheral structure in the new stage of the expanding and changing global system. Doubtless, too, the cultural argument finds its place here: 'European' aspiration, which has always characterized Latin America, diminishes the effects of the cultural contrast one finds in Asia and Africa, where capitalist expansion has been and is associated with a foreign culture (and formerly with direct domination).

There are few unifying elements that allow one to speak generally of Asia and Africa, except in contrast with Latin America. Asia and Africa have never been shaped as peripheries to the same extent as Latin America. The substratum of previous societies is always present and accordingly the differences are considerable, at the level of development of its forces of production (especially in 'traditional' agriculture) and social organization and culture, etc. Asia and Africa were integrated only marginally in the mercantilist system (certain regions of Africa that supplied slaves for America, the Levant where trade began to decline in the unequal competition of European and Ottoman mercantilisms, conquered India, Indonesia and the Philippines). Real integration into the world capitalist system occurred in the recent epoch of imperialism. This integration was made through the almost general means of political colonization by the great monopolies, themselves competing for hegemony. Because of the inequality of these metropolises and the diverse roles in the imperial systems played by the various colonies, colonization, far from homogenizing, led on the contrary to more differentiation. It unified only in the sense that it created a common objective: the national liberation struggle for independence. From the variety of social forces unleashed by this movement resulted, in the period after the Second World War, a variety of independent regimes, despite a common concern to strengthen political independence by economic and social development within the world system (and not by breaking away from it) that culminates in 'non-alignment'. We have elsewhere offered an analysis of this movement we describe as a 'bourgeois national plan', symbolized by the Bandung conference that for a score of years opened the era of 'the development ideology'.[12]

These objective differences clarify those that define the overall development strategies pursued. In Latin America *desarrollismo* is dominant, a simple ideology whose Euro-American cultural root shines forth: industrialization (import substitution in fact, which least disturbs the initial structures and the share of income they enjoy) and accompanying urbanization strengthen the position of the middle classes, bearers of democracy. That these middle classes, in the structures of a system that is incapable at the same time of satisfying the mass of the people, become the objective base of authoritarian regimes goes unnoticed. Certainly, the failure in these circumstances of the bourgeois national effort, which the current crisis was to reveal – especially in the dimension of foreign indebtedness and the threat of subordination inherent in 'readjustment' – leads to the weakening of dictatorial regimes. But the new democracy finds itself at an impasse from the start: if it should take on a popular character it will come up against the demands of the readjustment imposed by the dominance of transnational capital.

In Asia and Africa, Bandung inaugurated a series of more radical attempts, based on profound reforms (agrarian reforms and nationalizations) and often on unchallenged popular backing. These experiences, in the forefront of the effort for national bourgeois construction. ended up being questioned, under the combined effects of constant hostility from the West (going to the extreme of military intervention) and historical insufficiencies and limitations of the

local bourgeois leadership itself. The systematic hostility of the West demonstrates the stupidity of economistic analysis according to which it is always possible to exploit selectively and intelligently the opportunities provided by the market to strengthen the degree of one's autonomy within the world capitalist system. It reminds us that world capitalism, far from being a favourable factor in the constitution of new and independently autonomous centres, is fundamentally opposed to it. Beyond the achievements measured in terms of growth and variables, these avant-garde examples seemed to have come close to the aim – national control of accumulation – when the crisis brought a brutal reminder of the impossibility.

Other strategies, pursued in Asia and Africa, have never targeted autonomy and control of accumulation. With simple acceptance of adjustment to the trends of world development, they have managed only very unequally to achieve the objectives of strong growth. The success of some (Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malaysia, Philippines, etc.), must naturally be matched with the failure of others, doomed to stagnation (most African countries, among others). Neither the former nor the latter can truly be classified as a 'bourgeois national plan'. It is development of a markedly comprador character. The industrialization occasionally achieved, and taken by some at face value without analysis of the structures or specific social and political impact, does not lead spontaneously and gradually to social homogenization or national autonomy. On the contrary, free zones and cheap manpower, excessive technological and financial dependence, without the prospect of their supersession, give this industrialization a comprador character that prevents consideration of its political and social effects like those in the historically constituted centres.

In this grim picture of 'compradorization' or 'recompradorization' widespread in the Third World (this factor, in our view, justifies acknowledgment of the reality of the Third World, notwithstanding its diversity), is there a single exception? Only the cases of South Korea and Taiwan, to which we shall return, permit the question to be raised.

The contemporary evolution of the Arab world, in any case, illustrates the thesis of the historical impossibility of a bourgeois national plan and, consequently, the necessarily comprador character of the 'adjustment' perspective. In the 1950s and 1960s, an end was made to the old social alliances on which the colonial and semi-colonial development of old imperialism had been based; direct colonization or indirect domination based on the local power of the large landowners and the old mercantile comprador bourgeoisie were overturned by the national movement in the main Arab countries. Aspirations to autonomous national development, industrialization and modernization, 'social justice' (redistribution, agrarian reforms, etc.), unity of the Arab nation all met in a plan that was one of the most radical in the Third World. The constant and violent hostility of the West using, among others, its Zionist military base combined with the class interests of the reactionary forces in power in the oil Gulf, and the weaknesses and historical limitations of the bourgeois national plan, have led to the current disaster. This is characterized by recompradorization of the society (here called *infitah*): dismantling of

industrial autonomy, abandonment of projects for agricultural and food self-sufficiency, submission to the new transnational financial capital, cultural aggression, etc. The new system is based on the predominance on the regional scale of oil interests (and of reactionary regimes in the region) and the transfer of local powers to neo-comprador classes and strata, who see their enrichment in the subordination of their countries to American-oil predominance.

The predominance of the Gulf itself implies that the Arab peoples renounce their unitary national aspiration, without which the centre of gravity of dominant social forces would be unable to maintain itself in the oil-producer deserts. The replacement of popular nationalism with an obsolete aspiration founded on fundamentalist ideology plays an essential role in this framework. The 'confessional' fragmentation to which it leads does not spoil, but rather enhances, economic 'integration' of the various Arab countries into the neo-imperialist 'oil-producer' system. For the Western plan in course integrates, in its way, the various Arab regions by developing new 'complementarities' there (such as export of manpower from some towards the oil-producer regions, on which is founded the semi-rentier economy of consumption). In this sense, we have said that fundamentalist ideology is no answer to the crisis but one of its symptoms.[13]

Is it a matter of a new phase of 'adjustment' to the imperatives of a global expansion of capitalism, capable of ensuring at the local level a new development of the forces of production? We very much doubt it. For the main countries of the region – Egypt in the first place – the plan must necessarily result in the foreseeable future in a retreat of development of the forces of production and a worsening of social chaos, inequality, etc. The hopes some place in a new growth, sustained by an 'open door' to Arab and transnational capitals, have been systematically dashed during the ten years of *infitah* in operation. The objective of imperialism here, is to destroy the potentialities rather than exploit them by controlling their development. That, it would seem, is the condition for the permanence of Western control of the oil, the only resource of real interest to them in the region. The 'adjustment' proposed here leads almost certainly to self-destruction and, in this sense, the ideologies that allow it actively or passively (fundamentalist obsolescence) manifest the desperation; the collective suicide. For it is not possible – in the name of some simplistic and mechanical 'optimism' – to rule out the possibility that a society, incapable of reacting positively to the challenges of its time, should allow itself in one way or another to be 'destroyed', in the sense that it loses the possibility to shape for itself its own destiny which, then, results exclusively from the interplay of external forces. Such a society – and the classes that compose it – ceases to be an active subject of history to become its object. That has already occurred many times in history.

The scope for adjustment possible 'with growth' (without even considering 'redistribution') has here become virtually nil. This given is perhaps the new factor. To take the example of Egypt, since the start of the 19th century with Mohamed Ali, then during the classic century of imperialism, with the efforts of Khedive Ismail and of the liberal bourgeoisie of the Wafd, the plans for

bourgeois national construction were successful. Each time, and before they were brutally dismantled by imperialism imposing its recompradorization in the forms corresponding to the epoch, they had managed to develop the forces of production in an irreversible way. It was the same with the attempt of Kemal's Turkey, an early example of a bourgeois national construction initiated after the First World War. Can one today overlook that the 'opening' of the country from the 1950s was fatal to this attempt? The Turkish economy, far from showing itself capable of integrating profitably into the world system and benefiting from it, found itself caught in a tragic impasse on all sides: de-industrialization, massive emigration, total loss of autonomy, social chaos and political violence, etc.

The hypothesis we have advanced is precisely in this area. We say that up till now the history of the Third World has been that of attempts at bourgeois national construction that, albeit abortive, have followed the rate of world expansion of capitalism. We suggest that for at least some regions of the periphery, including the Arab world, this chapter of history is definitively closed. The bourgeoisie, in its various forms, at the current stage of capitalist transnationalization and taking account of the internal contradictions of every kind (social, political, cultural) engendered by the historical development of the region, totally accepts its comprador status and will no longer attempt a national construction. No matter how far the *Nahda* was the ideological expression of the bourgeois national attempt, we have suggested that the era of the *Nahda* is finished.[14] This hypothesis does not mean that the task of national construction is henceforth obsolete. The tasks of the 'democratic national revolution' (development of the forces of production in autonomy from the global system, that is autocentric construction) remain on the agenda of ineluctable necessities. What is new is that national construction can no longer be bourgeois but must be popular. The delinking that this content implies will necessarily open the chapter of new contradictions considered above (the clash of socialist, statist and national capitalist tendencies).

Is it a hypothesis peculiar to the Arab region? Is not the scope for adjustment with growth and redistribution just as narrow for the whole of the African continent? Plunged into chronic famine, the preserve of mining enclaves and global mastery of chaos by the renewed intervention of the 'rapid intervention forces' of the West, can there be anything else on its agenda than the 'readjustment' counselled by the World Bank, IMF, etc.?

Doubtless particular internal factors of all kinds explain these impasses of capitalist expansion. But do not these factors of economic, strategic, political and cultural weakness operate in an unfavourable climate? The conflict of theses is right here: some assert that global capitalist expansion is favourable to national bourgeois constructions, and we argue the reverse, namely that it constitutes a barrier to them. Can the barrier be surmounted here and there? Perhaps, but we do not see how and why, not even in Latin America, and *a fortiori* in Africa and the Middle East. Could it be done in India perhaps? The question is worth asking, since India, for its continental scale and the (relative) success of its unity, enjoys considerable advantages. Here, more than anywhere

else perhaps, the 'internal factors' (from the bourgeoisie or from the mass of the people) are relatively weightier. The successful bourgeois national hegemony, in an economy less vulnerable by force of circumstance (going as far as capacity to control technology that enables some Indian transnationals to penetrate the world market) and in the political system (capability of neutralizing the divided opposition of the people), is not currently as threatened with recompradorization as elsewhere. Should we therefore overlook the weaknesses: a very slow rate of overall development, massive poverty that is difficult to see an escape from, etc.? What effects will these weaknesses have in the more distant future?

Finally, we come to the last example of bourgeois national constitution in our time, that of South Korea (and perhaps Taiwan). Is this really an exception, in the sense of an irreversible success of bourgeois national construction taking its place in the world system?[15]

The presentation of the 'Korean case' by the ideologues of capitalism – one should say the World Bank propaganda – stresses the conjunction achieved between exceptional growth sustained over more than twenty years, and a broad opening to the outside (even more remarkable growth in exports, priority concern with competitiveness, technological borrowings, intended openness to the transnationals, etc.). It even seeks to explain the success of the experience by this conjunction, with openness being the necessary and sufficient condition for strong growth. In this perspective, it contrasts the so-called 'inward-looking' strategy, as it sees industrialization through import substitution, with an export-oriented strategy.

These are tall stories with little bearing on reality, since, first, the concept of autocentric development has very little to do with the conventional practice of import substitution, as has been shown, and, second, growth and an opening to the exterior cannot be directly and simply correlated. For example, North Korea has also recorded exceptional growth – at a similar rate – without the openness. On the contrary, openness in itself, if it has permitted strong growth in some countries, has doomed many others to stagnation. On the other hand, the models of strong growth with openness are found in structural evolutions totally different from one another. For example, one could not reduce to a common denominator the cases of Korea and Taiwan on the one hand, and those of Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia or the Philippines on the other. The latter experiences are no different from those of other regions of the compradorized Third World, from Côte d'Ivoire to Pakistan . . . Products of industrial delocalizations dominated by transnational capital, industrial sub-contracting and the flowering of 'free zones' based on the super-exploitation of local labour for the benefit of the world market, of (frequently mining) exploitation, of tropical agriculture, these 'miracles' of growth here, have no more than elsewhere, contributed to homogenizing society and broadening its scope for autonomy in the system. On the contrary, they are bound by social dislocation and greater dependence, reducing to nil the hope of local control of accumulation. In this sense it is really a case of 'development of under-development', to repeat the pertinent expression of

André Gunder Frank, if one is to understand that under-development is not stagnation of the forces of production but absence of national control over their development.

The case of Korea is interesting and significant precisely because it is not what its eulogists suppose. The central role of the state that characterizes this experience cannot be reduced to that of a 'planner–conciliator' of various economic interests, local and foreign. The state here must be the veritable motor of development, extremely suspicious of transnational capital, which has generally not been allowed free entry (the Korean state has so far preferred to direct investment through subsidiaries, a policy based on the creation of national, largely public, enterprises, buying technology not globally but in packets, and taking care to master its use rapidly). The significance of statist intervention has been so great that the private form taken by the consortiums – in Korean *chaecol* (analogous to the Japanese *zaibatsu*) – is perhaps only a form of the national bourgeois state. In these circumstances, but thanks to them, Korea has managed to 'selectively exploit the opportunities afforded by the world market', as it is said.

Exceptional circumstances have favoured this statist national construction. In the first place, the competition from North Korea which, during the 1950s, was progressing at a faster rate than South Korea, but doomed at the time to wretched stagnation precisely through the American protectorate and the policy of its local executant, Syngman Rhee. Without any doubt, the real attraction of the success of the North is the origin of the agrarian reform undertaken in the South after the 1950–53 war. There are perhaps other elements that have operated favourably: the strong statist national tradition peculiar to all the old nations of eastern Asia, the embryo of a true bourgeoisie closely linked to the ruling class, the so-called 'Confucian' state of mind. This latter ideological dimension, characteristic of the whole area of Chinese culture (China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam), could not alone explain the success of the region, whether of capitalism or socialism. One has often had good reason to resort to the analogies between the component of this ideology and those designated in the 'Protestant ethic': individualized competition and the hierarchy of duties accepted on this base, regard for work and education, etc. More significant, in our view, is the fact that this ideology is presented in a lay, civil and non-religious form. Although Confucianism has not been able to eliminate the religious spirit, it has very much limited its influence. A conservative ideology to be sure – with respect for order and the (highly patriarchal) family – it is nonetheless more flexible, not being formulated in religious writings (which are – and always have been – susceptible of diverse interpretations but constrained nevertheless to survive a formal reading of the texts). By this token, too, Confucianism has perhaps been one of the ingredients of greater national cohesion: the individual knows of no other affiliation than that of the family and nation, and does not have to identify with a religious community to which he owes fidelity.

In this framework of analysis, we believe it is possible to distinguish the real problems from those that appear to be superficial, or even false.

The formulation of various possible evolutions in general, and here of Korea in particular, in strictly economic terms does not answer the questions asked, but merely illustrates implicitly differing answers to them. It is like the exercise of examining under what technical economic conditions (technology, finance, manpower availability, markets, etc.), the 'input–output matrix can be filled in', that is, the internal complementarities between various outputs, income and demand can be systematically developed.

The real question is whether South Korea has achieved – or can achieve – the constitution of a bourgeois national state, in the sense in which we have defined it. Has it gained control of accumulation? Can it develop and retain it?

Appearances suggest a positive – and exceptional – response to the question, although, in the absence of sufficient data and because the experience is still too brief for the data to be indisputable, question marks remain in our mind.

At the level of social homogenization, which is both the result of the constitution of the bourgeois national state and the condition for its reproduction and expansion, it seems fairly clear that the achievements of Korea go far beyond those of any other Third World capitalist country. Not only because by virtue of its historical origins, the Korean nation is a strong reality, but also because the economic development has been based here on an income distribution considerably less unequal than elsewhere. But at this level what are the real tendencies of the system? As regards the rural areas and the towns–countryside relations, there is broad agreement on the impact of agrarian reform and state policies on agricultural crop prices in their time, but the disintegrating effects of the rural modernization under way and the market ideology that is gaining ground are, it seems, the object of controversies that are difficult for the outside observer to judge. It is the same for the evolution of wages for the various categories of workers, with differing skills, and the relationship to the strong and continual improvement in productivity. As one knows, our thesis is that the characteristic of the behaviour of the system at its centres is precisely to ensure, over a long period, the parallel evolution of wages (of all wages) and the global productivity of the economic system. Can one say this is the case in Korea?

The response to the questions of external vulnerability can likewise not be made on the sole ground of its manifestation, namely the economic system. At this level in fact one can sustain any old thesis or its converse. There is no a priori reason urging the conclusion that Korea will lose control of the technologies necessary for the pursuit of its development, nor the inverse conclusion that it will necessarily pass from control of the current conventional industrial technologies to that of the so-called 'high technology' of the future. In the same way, will the external debt – at present not negligible but modest in comparison with that of other Third World countries – remain under control, or will it serve as a Trojan horse for transnational capital? Vulnerability to external markets and to the demands of raw materials supply is not, *a priori*, necessarily more severe than that limiting the autonomy of other – developed – countries in the capitalist system, although this vulnerability seems particularly severe at the current stage, especially for some industries on which Korea has

placed some reliance in its competitiveness (shipyards, for example).

In fact, three preliminary questions can more usefully be discussed here to carry the analysis forward. First: who is really the master who controls capital in Korea: the state or the 'private' sector? We have already put the question in the form: are the *chaecols* forms of action by the state or the reverse, is the state the tool of the *chaecols*? Second: will the aspiration of the middle classes for the models and levels of consumption of the developed West, reinforced by the ideology of the market, impose an increasing inequality, calling into question the prospect of homogenization? Third: to what extent will Korea accept an eventual strategic blackmail by its protective allies, the United States and Japan? Will it eventually agree to surrender its further economic development, if it appears too successful, in order to remain in the strategic and military sphere of the United States?

In this framework, the questions of homogenization and autonomy (control of accumulation) appear closely linked, and the – common – response to be social and political rather than economic. Our hypothesis here is that the monopoly of power is actually concentrated in the technocratic–military–capitalist class and that the continuance of this situation carries a strong risk of calling into question the possibility of a pursuit of autonomous national development, by virtue of the social egoism of the class in power and its vulnerability to an imperialist offensive aimed at 'compradorizing' it. That is the essence of historical experience, taught especially by Latin America. The question of decentralization is therefore central. We mean by that not only formal freedoms, important in themselves of course, but also the possibility of an autonomous expression of the popular social forces, alone capable, by imposing compromises, of ensuring social cohesion and thereby reinforcing the firmness of resistance to external aggression. We believe that this evolution also initiates the possibility for the socialist tendency to develop within the society, similarly we do not think the 'transition' and 'supersession of capitalism' should take one predetermined form. This possibility is only the expression of the historical necessity of a national and popular content, for which the hegemony of the new bourgeoisie can no longer meet the requirements in our epoch and in the light of the evolution of the world system as a whole. It is also clearly understood that this evolution may open the way to a real approximation to North Korea. The equally important development of this second half of the Korean nation is not the object of our analysis. Its positive aspects (notably national and social) and negative (at the level of the impasse of the current power structures) are known. Without a doubt, in any case, the situation is no more 'blocked' in the North than in the South, or at least it is so in its peculiar way in each of the two states. The general atmosphere in the region would allow for one Korea, thus become democratic and popular, half-capitalist and half-socialist, to play an important part, to seize the opportunity for more fruitful and less vulnerable relations through diversifying its partners – notably towards China – as the only way to strengthen its autonomy.

Our analysis of contemporary evolutions in the Third World thus leads us to

conclude that nothing in them encourages us to abandon our central thesis, namely that the world system of capitalist states is not a factor favourable to the construction of new national bourgeois states capable of meeting the challenges of the age, but rather the reverse: that it constitutes a handicap to this. The necessity of launching the complex and contradictory transition to socialism, through 'delinking', remains ineluctable.

Notes

1. The bibliography on these debates is substantial. For a selection of the main viewpoints and our theses, cf. Amin, Samir, *Unequal Development*, New York, Monthly Review Press, and Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1976; Amin, Samir, 'The End of a Debate' in *Imperialism and Unequal Development*, New York, Monthly Review Press, and Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1977; Amin, Samir, *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis*, New York, Monthly Review Press, and London, Heinemann, 1980. See further our studies of the crisis in: Amin S., Arrighi G., Frank A.G. and Wallerstein I., *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, New York, Monthly Review Press, and London, Macmillan, 1982. See, too, chapter 3 below (for critiques of Bettelheim and Warren).

2. An excellent critical synthesis of 'development theory' is provided by Fayçal Yachir, 'Où en est la théorie du développement?', Third World Forum, Dakar, May 1985, mimeo.

3. Amin, *Unequal Development*, p. 147.

4. Chapter 3 in the original French text, omitted in this translation, has already been published by the Research Foundation of the State University of New York in English translation as Samir Amin, 'Income Distribution in the Capitalist System', *Review*, 8, 1, Summer 1984, 3–28.

5. See *Imperialism and Unequal Development*; and *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1978.

6. Chapter 3 below.

7. 'Il y a trente ans', Bandung: paper presented to the United Nations University Conference on the 30th anniversary of Bandung, Cairo, April 1988, mimeo (to be published by UNU).

8. See *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism*; and *Class and Nation*, Introduction.

9. *Class and Nation*.

10. *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism*.

11. *Class and Nation*.

12. 'Il y a trente ans', Bandung.

13. See Chapter 6. Also Amin, Samir, (in Arabic) *The Crisis of Arab Society*, Cairo, 1985.

14. *The Crisis of Arab Society*. The Arabic word *Nahda* means renaissance and the term is used to denote the renewal of the Arab Orient in the 19th century.

15. Selective bibliography in: Michell, Tony, *The Republic of Korea, Employment, Industrialisation and Trade*, ILO, Geneva WEP, 1983; Foster-Carter, Aidan, 'Standing-up: the Two Korean States and Dependency Debate', Seoul National University, 1985, mimeo; Evans, Peter, 'Class, State and Dependence in East Asia', Seoul National University, 1985, mimeo.

2. The Problematic of Delinking

The strategic plan

Political movements, like the societies in which they operate, analyse the object reality that surrounds them and whose evolution they propose to influence by their strategies of action, by means of a conceptual system, ideological and scientific to a greater or lesser degree, which is itself the product of history. Discrepancies between this system and reality may, therefore, reduce the effectiveness of the strategies applied, or lead to unforeseen results or some contrary to expectations. The question of the nation as an objective social reality, a possible subject of history, whether principal or not, seems to us to raise such a doubt.

Our political vocabulary deploys the term 'nation' with a varying meaning or meanings that presuppose certain articulations between this true or supposed reality and other realities – the state, the world system of states, the economy and social classes. We are still nowadays the heirs of these concepts and their articulation in a system of various social theories developed out of the historical experience of 19th century Europe, in the shape of bourgeois nationalist theories or historical Marxism. Far from being convinced that the 'fresher' they are the better the social theories are, we have no intention of succumbing to the fashion that consists in throwing away Marx and certain others. We believe, on the contrary, that not only is historical materialism not rendered 'obsolete' by the actual evolutions, but gains increasing strength to the precise extent that by asserting itself as method and not confining itself as a system, it enriches the grasp of historical evolution.

The 19th century in Europe remains an epoch central to our modern history. During this century the essential realities that constitute the framework of the contemporary world were constructed, through decisive struggles of every kind – wars, revolutions, economic, social, political and cultural upheavals. Among the realities that have been built through three centuries of gentle ripening, one would certainly include the nation-state and the worldwide capitalist system, as well as the opposition of modern social classes. European social reflection produced rich interpretations of this constitution, paving the way for social science as we know it, a science at best embryonic until then.

Two theoretical entities have been produced in this framework, in

counterpoint to one another, Marxism and the theory of class struggle on the one hand, nationalism and the theory of integration of classes into the bourgeois democratic nation-state on the other. Both take into account numerous aspects of the immediate reality, characterized at one and the same time by social struggles going as far as revolution and by struggles between nation-states going as far as war. The one and the other purport to be effective instruments to inspire strategies of action by the protagonists who are the subjects of history and see themselves as such. Marx was not without reason in saying that nationalist ideology serves the interests of the bourgeoisie, and calling on the proletariat to stand outside the nation.

The real effectiveness of political strategies nevertheless depends on a specific conjuncture, whose existence one tends to forget, to turn it subsequently into an 'absolute'. This conjuncture is defined by a correlation

– that seems to us now to have been limited in time and space – between the following elements:
– between the state and another social reality, the nation;
– the dominant position of the bourgeois national states thus constituted in the world capitalist system, their 'central' (as opposed to peripheral) character in our conceptual system;
– a certain level of worldwide expansion of the capitalist system which makes 'autocentric' economic units, interdependent but enjoying a high degree of autonomy with respect to one another, central partners.

One can then see why this conjuncture gives the policies inspired by the theories under consideration a real effectiveness. First there is a possible field of action for 'national' economic policy, that is applied to a given territory delineated by frontiers and governed by a single state power. The instruments of this policy – centralized national monetary system, customs regulations, network of physical infrastructure of transport and communications, unifying education around a 'national' language, unified system of administration, etc. – have a certain autonomy in relation to the 'constraints' of the worldwide economy. Class relations – however conflictive – are regulated within and by the national state. There is in this sense an average price for national labour power, determined by history and internal class relations, a national system of prices that reflect the decisive social relations, among them the agriculture–industry relationship (since these prices determine peasant income, property rents, the extension of the market, etc.). In this sense, 'the law of value' has a national dimension. Nations and classes – workers, bourgeois, peasants – are the effective subjects of history. It is clearly understood that there is no Wall of China to cut these national systems off from the world system they constitute. Internal social relations depend in part on the positions held by the national states in question in the world hierarchy. All of them are 'central' capitalist economies to be sure, but the peripheries are unequally exposed to their expansion and will be even less open as competition between them grows more acute towards the end of the century. And all these economies are unequally

competitive. But they can improve this by coherent national policies, if the social relations permit. This effectiveness in turn facilitates social compromise and, without in any way 'abolishing class struggle', contains the conflicts within precise boundaries. In all of this complex reality of conflicts, those with opposing social classes and those who align the states in competition with one another are to some extent in equilibrium. Even the size of these nations seems to be at an 'optimum': thirty million citizens for the Britain, France and Germany of the period is the right size for the industry of the time.

In this conjuncture what is the role of the 'national' reality we have yet to describe? Ideology *a posteriori* gives an autonomous dimension to national reality by attributing to it pre-existence to the state, which seems debatable to us. For the European bourgeoisie, from the Renaissance to the century of the Enlightenment, seems more cosmopolitan than narrowly national. Moreover it divides its loyalties among several legitimacies, religious, or philosophical beliefs, friendships still feudal but also at the service of the absolutist monarchical state when it seemed reasonable. It is still largely mobile, at ease in the embrace of Christianity. As for the peasant population, it is more loyal to soil and province than to the future nation whose culture and even language it does not yet really share. But the state of the absolute monarchy gradually creates the nation, a task to be rounded off by bourgeois democracy. Doubtless this creation does not come from nowhere. But the ethno-linguistic conglomerations of provinces subject to the same ruler are not 'naturally' destined to become the modern nations of Europe. It is no more than a possibility. Stalin was right here, as we have said elsewhere,[1] to argue that the nation is a product of capitalism. For feudalism, from which the latter emerged, took no note of the nation and knew only Christianity and the fief. It was a product moreover largely shaped by the sword and the fire – as much as by the market – assimilating and compelling, destroying languages and dialects, and nearly always imperfect. A product also sometimes curiously aborted – when capitalist development hangs fire – or distorted by the skew of chance conjunction between local interests, ideological (especially religious) conflicts and international balances. It is only in the 19th century that the great melting pot, new industry calling for the diffusion of a national language, and the – slow – progression of Western electoral democracy really define nations. But this is in the framework of pre-existing states.

It is true that the strength of the model of the predecessors inspires those who come after. As there already exists an English, and a French nation, the German and the Italian nations assign themselves the task of creating themselves by creating their state. The political cunning of the promoters will be in finding social alliances and compromises that mobilize the forces in this direction.

The linguistic dimension acquires exceptional force in the European nation-states, that may even constitute the essence of the national factor as a new social factor. Certainly the material base of this reality is constituted by autocentric capitalist construction, relatively autonomous within the interdependence of the global system. But the national language to some extent constitutes its

active superstructure which operates effectively in its reproduction. Language as a means of unification is a relatively modern phenomenon. In the pre-capitalist world, local languages, of peasant and regional currency, coexist alongside an official language of religion and of the state, whose penetration is incomplete at best. Education and modern democracy turn the national language into an instrument that in the end defines the nation itself, its frontiers, its mass culture; it is attributed a mysterious power of transmitting 'national culture'. The virtues hitherto invested in the feudal lord, the absolute monarch, the men of God, the true 'proprietors' of populations and human communities, are transferred by democracy and its ideology to the entire nation. The literature of 'national identity' that flourished in the 19th century testifies to this transfer. The slide into jingoism, and indeed racism, is inherent to it.

On a closer examination, however, it would appear that this clear correlation, limited in time to the 19th century, is even more limited in space. Around these few 'model' nation-states, the world of the capitalist system, structured by different pasts that lose their legitimacy and effectiveness, remains inchoate and its destiny is uncertain and confused.

There are many ways of putting apparent order into this infinitely varied disorder. The narrow-minded economist of the Walt Rostow persuasion will, for the past, calculate scales of 'average income', just as the World Bank does today. The Marxist formalist will seek to identify the relative significance of the penetration of the capitalist wage-system. The anthropologist of culturalist inclination will discover signs of the historico-ideological foundation, the geopolitician zones of influence and intervention.

For what concerns us, namely identification of the historical subjects and eventual establishment of the constituent nations of the world capitalist system, attention must be given to the state: first, the state in its relations to continually expanding capitalist reproduction. And at this level, there is no state but the central, that is one that controls external relations and subjects them to the logic of autocentric accumulation. Elsewhere there are only 'countries' administered from outside as colonies and semi-colonies, or ostensibly independent, but powerless not only to influence the exterior according to their own needs but even to avoid the tides and influence from the exterior. But attention must in fairness be given to the 'doubtful cases', those that till the present have not veered to one side or the other, the 'semi-peripheries' to use Immanuel Wallerstein's expression. Here the destiny of the state will determine the rest.

The European semi-peripheries – the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires – were to veer in the direction of central evolution, but not without difficulty. The start to the constitution of a unified capitalist market, albeit under the influence initially of external penetration, represented a challenge to the old dynastic state. The challenge in the early stages would take the form of a renovation–modernization that was far from hesitant and made giant strides: education,

constitutional reform (the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy and petty parliamentarianism), social reform (abolition of serfdom in Russia), etc. But here, the nationalist ideology, largely imported along with the rest, was to prove as much a handicap as a driving force. It was to end in the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire, putting the small inheritor states at risk of being peripheralized, until their later incorporation into the Soviet empire. And if the Russian empire survives – with and even thanks to the Bolshevik revolution – even at the cost of the loss of Poland and Finland, it is in great measure doubtless because the Russian nation is predominant there.

It is one of those phenomena of discrepancy that constitute the hypothesis of this reflection. For it cannot be said that each of the bourgeoisies, if they still exist – Czech, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, Slovene, Croat, German – needs 'its' state and 'its' market. It cannot be said that they would have been unable to constitute segments of a single bourgeoisie on the basis of a single integrated market. It cannot be said that the mass of the peasant population would prefer to be exploited by its own 'national' bourgeoisie. The polarization of the conflict around language is typical – and due in great part, according to us, to the projection of the ideology attached to the new role of language in the developed European West. The complex interplay of real and potential social conflicts leads the political forces – social democratic parties of the Second International, peasant parties, parties of the bourgeois revival – to theorize, justify and propose endless strategies that finally all fall away before the myth of the linguistically unified nation-state, as a reproduction of the 'model'.

The result is in any case rather mediocre. The inheritor states are the confirmation of incapable local bourgeois hegemonies, which quickly fall into the lap of Berlin or Paris. The potential for capitalist development is thrown away and economic stagnation is a marked characteristic. With the absence of bourgeois democracy compensated for by talk of jingoistic mobilization against a neighbour, the affair is settled – oddly, by the regimes put into place by the Red Army in the aftermath of the defeat of fascism – by the generalized expulsion of minorities! Since then the system inspired and dictated by the Soviet model and, with the exception of Yugoslavia, integrated into the Soviet empire, has inaugurated a new history. Not everything in this new history is negative and it cannot be said that the fate of the peoples of the region would have been better in any other way and that they would then have escaped their peripheralization. But if one can imagine the unrealized potentialities, the maintenance and renewal of the ancient empire – and nowadays a kind of Hungary–Yugoslavia (which are not doing so badly in the present-day world) at the scale of the entire region – would perhaps have allowed more room for manoeuvre for the plans for independence and democracy.

Russia would have been inaugurated with more talent, and the invention of Bolshevism is no small thing in the history of humankind. That it has little to do with socialism, that it has given Russification a power that no Western colonization has ever had (precisely through what is, despite everything, the progressive dimension of the Soviet renewal), is not the issue.

Further to the south and east one comes to the world that was not to escape peripheralization. First, the centres carve out colonial empires there. Some regions have this status from the mercantilist period – the British and Dutch Indies, the Philippines. Others fall to the imperialist scramble for Africa at the end of the 19th century. The states that retain formal independence – China, the Ottoman Empire, Persia – are in reality 'semi-colonies'. At the level of the economic base, there is no mystery: the peripheralization is the systematic work of colonial administrations or the inevitable result of the drift by states whose sovereigns expect no more than to survive from week to week. But at the level of the superstructure, things are not so one-dimensionally uniform; here the past is a weightier encumbrance. And it is in this regard that the most outlandish simplifications and most Eurocentric projections have flourished. As the nation in Europe is the historical product of capitalism and unknown in feudal times, in the name of Eurocentrism one denies the possibility of an analogous social factor elsewhere, for periods that one can only imagine as 'feudal' as well. We have pronounced on this very point and attempted to describe the tribute-paying mode in its non-feudal Asian and African forms. A phenomenon, whose similarity with the previous national phenomenon one cannot fail to note, often appears when a complete and advanced form of this tribute-paying mode entails the statist centralization of surplus and its unifying circulation in the society. Linguistic phenomena similar to those that Europe would not develop until the capitalist epoch would also testify to this similarity, quite clearly in China and Egypt, in part at least in India and at certain epochs of Arab history.

Attention must be paid to the regions and states whose fate is not determined at the moment of European irruption into their area. Was China also on the point of inventing capitalism? Would it have strengthened the Chinese nation too, but there on the basis of a substratum already present? There are indications of this. Is it this maturity that has prevented worse: disintegration? Or is it the Confucian bonding and the sheer size of the continent that made the conqueror hesitate? (But India did not dismay either Dupleix or the East India Company.) It still seems that the nation-state, despite its decline, and with hindsight here, was the historical subject. It provided the framework – national is the only way to describe it – in which the historical subjects that constitute classes face one another under the successive hegemonies of the heavenly aristocracy and bureaucracy, then the bourgeoisie, and in the end under a peasant revolution, led by the communist party, to regulate the conditions of internal transformation and external relations.

India, too, was pregnant with a capitalist development that Marx doubtless did not expect and whose reality has been shown by Ramkrishna Mukherjee.[2] The disappearance of the Indian state, perhaps merely the fruit of a passing conjuncture, to the benefit of colonialism, has nevertheless had longstanding, irreversible, effects in the fields of national and statist construction. Indian unity is not, one must quickly add, a product of British colonization. And its maintenance after independence is the expression of the will of the political liberation movement without objective foundations. Hinduism certainly

supplies a real common denominator; is not the proof of this that unitary efforts were to fail outside its area of dominance, in the Islamized regions? But this common denominator also operates for a family of a dozen linguistically related great nations, which includes most of the peoples of the sub-continent. Here unification of the capitalist market is not called in question by the will of the bourgeoisies of these various nations to break up the new state to their benefit, as was the case in central and eastern Europe. Is it because the ideology of the nation-state had not penetrated into this part of the world less clouded by the West-European model than Austro-Hungary and the Balkans were?

The Ottoman state and the Egyptian state also provide useful food for thought.[3] The ripening of capitalist relations is evident in the Balkans and in Rumelia, in Egypt and Syria. The state that superimposed itself over all the component populations – Arab and Turkish Muslims, Greek Christians, slaves and Armenians – was not 'naturally' an obstacle to this ripening. Its incapacity to withstand the forays of foreign capital would in the end rob it of its legitimacy. But there too, as in central Europe, the proof would be provided by the history that the inheritor states would offer scarcely more effective resistance. It was therefore possible to envisage another kind of doubtless more effective response, modernization within an Ottoman framework that had become lay and pluri-national. This is not a pipe dream. History, written after the event by the Balkan peoples, the Arabs and the Turks, suggests that the desire for 'national independence' of the populations (or bourgeoisies?) was irrepressible. That is not obvious. In the Balkans perhaps, decadent Muslim fanaticism, combined with active British, Austrian and Russian intervention, strengthened the transfer of the ideology of the small nation-state to the Greek, Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian peoples. The real resonance of this ideology remains a matter of debate, as is shown by the lack of interest shown in it by the 'Greek bourgeoisie of the exterior'.

In the Arab part of the empire, the Ottomans did not recruit solely from Muslim reaction. Intellectual bearers of the Arab national renaissance in Syria and Egypt defended Ottoman unity, not only as a tactical shield against the Europeans, but also, sometimes because, with astounding perspicacity, they believed the break-up would still further weaken the possibilities of an effective renewal. Is it known that the Arab and Muslim intellectuals defended the thesis of an undenominational state (defended the Christians in the Balkans and Armenia against Turkish oppression) and a pluri-national state, and kept their distance from the Khalifate? Here, as in India, the European model of the nation-state had only limited appeal. Unhappily this appeal would be great in the decisive sector of the young Turks and the secret organization for unity and progress which, taking the initiative for the creation of a then artificial 'Turkish' perspective, would begin what was to be completed by the defeat of 1918 and the Kemalist revolution. In an even more tragic version of central Europe, this option would end in making Turkey the last 'lumpenproletarian' wagon in a Europe that would repulse it. In a necessary echo, and in the face of the deplorable behaviour of the Arabs of the Mashreq in the 1914–18 War (the Arab leaders – doubtless underestimating Great Britain's intentions – believed

possible an alliance with Britain against the Turks at the very moment when Egypt was rising against British domination), the Egyptian liberal bourgeoisie rallied round this thesis that was predominant in the inter-war period. This option, later abandoned for a healthy return to Arab Egypt, finds objective foundation in the 'two stage' character of the Arab nation, as we have tried to show in *The Arab Nation: Nationalism and Class Struggles*.

In the Americas likewise, on a very different historical substratum however, the state operates as an active subject, forging the nation or attempting to do so, with greater or lesser success. The base provided by the construction of an autocentric capitalist economy was itself established from New England to be extended throughout the United States after the settlement of the question of the South: but it did not manage to establish itself in Latin America, despite the early accession to independence. The national superstructure constituted in the United States has such peculiar characteristics that one hesitates to speak of nation in the singular, despite the 'purity' and unparalleled success of the capitalist development. Did the two original cultures, petty commodity of New England and slave colonial of the South, fuse? Do they continue side by side? Are they diluted in a new culture that is gradually shaped by massive immigration? Is the racially-based pyramid defining North American society to the present day more or less significant than linguistic uniformity? The unsurmounted peripheralization of the economic base in Latin America substantially reduces the extent to which the state has formal existence. All the more since it is a case of a Creole state marginalizing the Indian communities. One can hardly speak of a nation-state in Mexico when, after the revolution of the 20th century, hispanification of the Indian communities reaches a decisive stage. Brazil however constitutes one of those oddities of history, where the state – a Portuguese rather than specifically Brazilian state moreover – is able to impose itself, even without an economic base and even without perhaps for a long time a nation. In any case, in this field as in others, in Latin America, the European model remains the sole point of reference and with it the unchallenged ideology of the nation-state.

Actual history has therefore led us through this rapid overview to challenge the ideology of the nation, whether in its bourgeois version (the nation is a pre-existing reality, the ideal state – the nation-state – is founded on it and reveals its potential) or its vulgar Marxist version (capitalism creates nations and generalizes the nation-state form to the entire world). Actual history suggests rather that the state is the active subject that sometimes creates the nation, sometimes 'regenerates' it, but often fails to do either. As actual history further suggests, the significance of the nation-state ideology is that it does not always manifest itself as a progressive active agent in capitalist development but as a deviant influencing its development in a negative direction or slowing down its rate. It is a shining success only in Western Europe, Russia, China, Japan and the United States; and the nation-state/autocentric economy correlation is limited in time and space. In those cases the nation became an active historical subject, a framework for the conflicts and compromises

between the subjects who in the final analysis constitute capitalism's social classes or emerge from it. Elsewhere, whether the economic base remains peripheral or becomes so, whether the state fragments or disappears, whether the potential national constructions emerge or fail to do so, groups and social classes, communities of various kinds and the state confront each other in a play of conflicts that does not permit control of the destiny of the people in question. The true historical subject here is the 'liberation movement' rather than the classes or nation. This liberation movement, described as 'national' – such is the potency of the nation-state ideology – brings together classes, groups and communities, and assigns them their objectives: independence, 'development' and national construction. It has achieved the first, but generally failed in the essence of the others, certainly by virtue of the class character of its hegemonic component, but also because the nation-state ideology is not as effective as it is believed to be.

The nation-state ideology is, however, so powerful that when, in the aftermath of the Second World War, all the countries of the world were bidding for independence, they constituted a system of would-be nation-states. But at the very moment when the nation-state was being proclaimed everywhere, it was entering a crisis everywhere, even at its centres of origin, a crisis from which there seems to us no escape. One finds a good example of the strength of the ideology in the meaning given to the terms themselves. In English, the language of a culture that is almost untouched by Marxism, state and nation are regarded as virtual synonyms. Typically the UN, which is an organization of states, is called the United Nations.

The worldwide expansion of the capitalist system had, in the 1945–70 period, reached a stage that gave it qualitatively new characteristics. Until the end of the 19th century, the worldwide expansion had merely integrated a certain number of basic products into a market that was still an international rather than a world market. This first step allowed the operation of the laws of value of a national character, within the framework of the constraints operating through international competition through an embryonic world capitalist law of value. At this stage, the social classes were still essentially national classes, defined by social relations confined to the limits of the state. There was therefore a conjunction between the struggles of these classes and the play of politics, which was regulated precisely within the framework of these states. From the end of the 19th century to the Second World War, the internationalization of monopoly capital began in parallel with the international market for basic products. But this stage is marked by the absence of world hegemony, and the monopolies, constituted on the basis of competitor central states, operated in a privileged position in the peripheral regions carved out between the colonial empires and the spheres of influence of these states. The absence of a state or its weakness in these peripheral regions had the effect that social relations confined within the frontiers of central national states could still govern the essential dynamism of capitalist expansion. The principal subjects of history remained the national social classes, even if the working

classes among them would henceforth clearly align their strategies within a reformist, or imperialist, perspective. After the Second World War, began the stage of the worldwide expansion of the processes of production themselves through the break-up of systems of production into segments that the so-called 'transnational' form of enterprise would spread through the globe under its control. United States hegemony, even if it is now facing challenge, provided an adequate framework for this transnationalization. Undoubtedly the global value and employment produced in this way was a modest proportion of the whole, but that is not the issue. It is a fact that the interests invested in these areas of economic activity are those that dominate the system, and determine its evolution by their concentration in the areas of the most advanced technological progress, and are, in short, the typical new forms of contemporary capitalism. Is it not the case that nearly half of world trade is now made up of internal transfers to the transnational? And the relative mass of international capital flows of direct interest to these sectors of activity is undoubtedly at least as significant within the world capital market. For the first time too, we see social classes taking on a world dimension; white-collar workers are employed by IBM in the United States, Germany, Senegal, Morocco, Brazil and Indonesia; blue-collar workers make parts for or assemble such and such make of motor-car in a score of countries, etc. A single world labour force has been constituted; the world dimension of the law of value wins over the local dimensions. This reality finds its obvious reflection in economistic discourse: the discourse of governors, of the right or left, is shot through with this constraint of competitiveness on a world scale; it is presented as an inescapable and unavoidable fact, and to ignore it is to turn one's back on 'progress', etc. But by this token, the state – national or not – forfeits its effectiveness as the locus for drawing up the strategies to control capitalist expansion or modulate it. As there is no planetary state, and while United States hegemony that has partly fulfilled this role is itself in crisis, while the world institutions (IMF, etc.) are embryonic, while the political games (elections, etc.) are still confined to the state systems, the correlation between class conflicts and compromises on one side and politics on the other has vanished.

But this general crisis does not have the same impact on the various components of the world system.

The developed capitalist centres – the United States, Europe and Japan – do not have the essence of their advantages threatened by this evolution. The United States enjoys the relative advantage of political and national homogeneity on the scale of a continent; Japan the advantage of national unity, but on the scale of a more average-sized country and, furthermore, one poor in natural resources and confronted with neighbours who could threaten its security. Europe is handicapped by its historical legacy. It had been the greatest beneficiary of transnationalization in the first phase – in the 1950s and 1960s – when a decisive role was played in capitalist expansion of its fringes (Italy,

Spain) and modernization of its centres (Germany especially, and France). The European construction is ambivalent. It was presented by its promoters as the means of establishing a force capable of autonomy in regard to the United States and Japan, but it has also been the framework for transatlanticism.

The effects of worldwide expansion on the developed centres must be considered in the light of the crisis of state and politics that it has created. The state is no longer the effective instrument it was, even in the United States and Japan, and *a fortiori* in a divided Europe. The renewal of ultra-liberal anti-state ideologies is a response of surrender to this decline. But at a stroke the scope of politics is annulled. The seeds of this erasure of the sense of political choice are not new. The dominant imperialist position had long since created the conditions for the aims of the social-democratic compromise. But it was a national compromise, that is its terms depended on internal social relations (capital–working-class–middle strata). Voting for left or right, in these circumstances, implementing a reformist and Keynesian policy, or choosing austerity, unemployment and an attack on social privilege, were significantly different alternative choices. They were no longer so once the society accepted the notion of the constraint of 'competition on a world scale'. The political forces that engaged in electoral battle drew together in the consciousness of the narrowing of the gap between them. Their tactics tended even to reduce the gap to a minimum. To win the votes of the 'centre' one sought to speak in terms as close as possible to those of the opponent. The American 'Barnum's circus'[4] model, far from being a peculiarity regarded with contempt by the traditional European left, became the general trend. The role of social classes as historical subjects was obscured.

The ineffectiveness of politics does however create an uneasy feeling. The history of the United States, again in advance of that of Europe, has shown how this vacuum may be filled by a combination of permanent elements (do not racism and religious and social sidetracks serve a useful purpose in this stability?) and conjunctural coalitions of interests (professional, local, etc., working through lobbies). Are there not indications of similar phenomena appearing in Europe?

Worldwide expansion has also entailed, for the first time, the beginnings of a pluri-national working class within the very centres of developed capitalism. Migration is of course not a new phenomenon. But the great migrations that populated America came from capitalist centres in formation. In the countries of reception, assimilation was the rule – except of course for the slaves brought by force. France, likewise a country of immigration, readily assimilated Poles, Spaniards and Italians. The new migrations come from the periphery. They have already changed the composition of the working class in the centres and represent very large minorities in the United States (Latin Americans) and in Europe (Africans, Asians and West Indians). What is more, one aspect of the crisis of 'nation' is that assimilation is now denied and is no longer even sought by the new migrants. The consequence is that racism plays a disproportionate role in the political debate.

There are other indications of this 'Americanization' of Europe. Many

observers have noted the strengthening of the 'corporatist' tendencies growing with the decline of a feeling of general, national or class interest.

The optimists nevertheless stress the appearance of 'new movements' bringing new social forces into play, perhaps even new historical subjects capable of bringing to life the prospect of a new – socialist – society on the basis of objective contemporary reality. It is far from our intention to underestimate these new trends. Beyond the conjunctures aroused by the emergence of issues evaded by the traditional organizations (the peace movement for example) or by the defection from this same kind of organization (parties, trade unions), some movements indicate the emergence of a far-reaching maturity: the feminist movement, the ecological and local democracy movements, the ideological currents concerned with the reorganization of labour and the critique of commodity alienation, etc. All these movements are largely transclass, with a strong component in the new middle classes.

Is this a case of the emergence of new historical subjects? What social changes do they offer? Do these changes come within the potential evolution of capitalism and notably the maintenance of the centres/peripheries imbalance? Can they, and under what circumstances, initiate internal socialist development and North–South relations conducive to progressive transformation of the world system? What articulation with the new functions of the state does this potential demand?

The most advanced proposals and analyses in these areas call for a political restructuring of these nascent forces around the following four axes:

- a model of 'alternative development' based on expanding the scope for non-commodity and self-management activities;
- rejection of blind surrender to the demands of international competitiveness (in short, delinking to restore the lost autonomy to the national state);
- revision, albeit by regions, of North–South relations intended to strengthen the national autonomy of the partners and widen the scope for the popular movement, the foundation of a new internationalism;
- a pacifist approach to East–West relations, especially to broaden the interaction of the two Europes and provide scope to the East for liberalization and progress.

All that has our entire and unhesitating support. The programme defines for the North what we mean by delinking.

But one is obliged to note that there is no sign of this structuring in the foreseeable future. The large organizations are deaf, and the accepted mode of political regulation impenetrable. The tendency is therefore for these forces to be marginalized or to be incorporated into the system. The model of 'cantonization' of social and political life permits this absorption to the benefit of capital and it is the latter that remains the sole dominant force trampling on regional autonomies, and absurd votes on constantly recurring minor issues, and even the progressive evolution of customs, etc.

Of course the future is unpredictable, as all these prospective arguments suppose that the stability of the system is not challenged either by a worsening

of East–West confrontation that might follow Europe's closer adherence to the Atlantic alliance, or by a global financial and economic slump. A crash, panic, protective chain reaction, unpredictable responses to the political plan in case of too rapid a rise in unemployment, are unknowns about which one can only hazard a guess. But let us say that, if the relations continue in their current state of tension without a slump, an overall aggressive strategy of the North against the South, that has already begun, would be quite compatible with the apparent 'stability' of the system. This evolution would of course dash the hopes placed on the new movements of the North. The future would then entirely depend on the kind of answer made by the societies of the South.

But before turning to consideration of the crisis of state in the South, it may be useful to see how worldwide expansion affects the East.

Not long ago the received wisdom was that the Russian revolution, followed by China's, had irrevocably divided the earth into two – the capitalist system on the retreat, and the socialist system on the advance. Whether Russia's 'really existing socialism', as it is called, was perfect or perverted (the old Trotskyist thesis) is not the issue. Moreover the so-called Maoist thesis substituted the socialism achieved in China for the 'restoration of capitalism' in Russia. The defeat of the Gang of Four and the triumph of Deng Xiaoping clearly struck a blow against this range of views on the capitalism–socialism conflict. China appeared to differ less and less from the Soviet Union in the essential structures of social and political organization, so that the former and the latter were regarded as variants of a perverted 'really existing socialism', of a new society of specific classes or of modalities of capitalism (Charles Bettelheim's thesis). Moreover, should one not remember that China and Russia alike seek further integration into a world system from which they had previously been isolated against their will?[5]

The drift of the analyses could then gradually crystallize around the following theses:

– The so-called socialist revolutions are moments of constitution of social and political forces capable of bringing forward national strategies of modernization and development.
– The accomplishment of these tasks passes through a moment of 'separation', or isolation, from the world capitalist system.
– The development of the system gradually wipes out the original illusions about its 'socialist' character.
– Finally the system aspires to reintegration in the capitalist world order.

André Gunder Frank has gone furthest in this field in the most systematic way. Noting that Russia and China appear as 'semi-peripheries' (above all, I believe, if one takes account of the place and role of the state in their evolution rather than the simplistic development criteria of economism), that their revolutions come within a B cycle of contraction of capitalist expansion, between 1914 and 1945 (to adopt on his behalf Kondratieff's language on the succession of A and B cycles of capitalist expansion), Frank propounds the thesis that in the B

cycles some semi-peripheries (or peripheries) 'delink' to emerge as centres (or semi-peripheries) reintegrated in the following A cycle, corresponding to a higher stage of capitalist development and thereby consolidating this development. This occurred before the 20th century and is still occurring; hence the so-called socialist revolutions are bringing nothing new.

The logic of this thesis must, we believe, be taken still further. If it is the case, that is if the aspects of global movement indicated are the most significant, the thesis means that it is nation-states that constitute the decisive historical subjects, and not the popular classes that enter their composition. Within this perspective the world expansion of capitalism should necessarily lead to the emergence of new ripe 'centres', taking their place in the global system of interdependence, and eventually challenging the hegemonies *in situ*, etc. Undoubtedly this conclusion does not necessarily conflict with Marxism, for the thesis does not prevent the societies in question being class-based, giving rise to capitalist exploitation (including the statist form that purports to be 'socialist'). It does not prevent the ruling classes of the states in question being precisely those exploitative bourgeoisies. It does not necessarily adopt the nationalist ideology of the 'common good' of the various components (whether classes or not) of the national society. But it acknowledges – albeit sorrowfully – that the popular classes have not reached the maturity that will allow the autonomy of their plan for an eventual classless society. These classes are therefore manipulated and their intervention channelled and 'recuperated'. Everything happens as if they were ready to believe in the supremacy of common national interests, to the benefit of the classes that lead them. The 'nation' is therefore in the fullest sense, at the current stage of inadequate maturity of class consciousness, the decisive historical subject.

This thesis is not ours. We subject it to a double critique. First, the social systems of Russia and China cannot be reduced to capitalism (capitalism cannot exist without the composition of capital) nor can the one be reduced to the other (see my *The Future of Maoism*). Second, it is incorrect that in the previous B cycles certain backward formations should come to emerge through a phase of 'delinking', such as Russia and China in the 20th century. The new centres that emerged one after the other until the end of the 19th century immediately integrated into the world system, and increased their active participation in it, without 'delinking' in any way, at any time. But they are masters of their external relations, which is another matter. In other words, there was no contradiction then between the construction of new centres – new hegemonic national bourgeoisies – and the 'constraint of worldwide expansion'. This is a new contradiction and means that worldwide expansion has reached a qualitatively new level.

There are admittedly some apparent moments of 'delinking' before our epoch. We prefer to call them moments of 'debilitation' of integration in the world system. Some peripheral societies in the 19th century withstood the effects of the crisis in this way. That some of these cases – notably in America – suggest by the positive local reaction to this debilitation that 'development is not synonymous with integration in the world system' is clear. The fact that

none of these experiences is crowned with the emergence of new centres clearly illustrates the qualitative difference between the delinking of our epoch and the debilitation of world integration in earlier epochs.

Naturally this new contradiction raises a question for the East, the North and the South. Otherwise it would not be new.

The 'delinking' that follows the socialist revolution is in fact voluntary and positive, even if it is also imposed by a strategy of imperialist counter-attack that fails over the long term. This is the first difference in regard to the debilitations of integration withstanding the effects of crisis. In addition it is associated with strong social and ideological changes. And this factor is not without significance, even if the association is with a myth of socialist construction, a 'new', 'classless' society, a 'new man', a 'cultural revolution'. For it is precisely this association that allows of a criteria of rationality independent of that of world capitalism.[6] This delinking is also one of the indispensable aspects of the emergence of a new social mode – whether socialist or not. Its 'reintegration' in the world system therefore remains dubious. The eventual intensification of exchanges is not synonymous with integration.

A further step must certainly be made in making the analyses more concrete. One must distinguish the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe, China and other countries of the socialist Third World (Korea, Vietnam and Cuba). Without going into this complex subject, let us offer our broadly intuitive conclusions:

– The USSR would not accept a 'reintegration' that threatened its internal political system.
– China would not accept a 'reintegration' that threatened its pursuit of independent development.
– By contrast, the Eastern European countries might, if circumstances allowed, 'cross over to the West', but the risk would be reduced to the degree that a margin of autonomy (Hungarian and Yugoslav style) were allowed them, in conjunction with acceptable and accepted internal social changes.

In this framework, we support the view that delinking, whether one likes it or not, is associated with a 'transition' – outside capitalism and over a long time – towards socialism. This raises a host of other questions: that this transition is not the one conceived by Marx perhaps, or by the Second International, or even by the ideology of the systems in question (Bolshevism, the current Sovietism, Maoism, Deng's ideology); that it is not linear; that its still distant point of arrival is largely unknown. After all, socialism has still to be built. As Michelena aptly put it, if in 1500 one had been asked what capitalism would be, one would doubtless have furnished inadequate replies, even supposing one could then have imagined that what one was building was capitalism.[7] How then will Russia and China solve their problems, if they manage to do so? By evolution or by revolutions (those Mao expected)? How will these transformations articulate with other socialist breakthroughs? So many questions that evidently are without *a priori* answers.

Worldwide expansion has reached a new stage of maturity which has imposed the delinking associated with socialist breakthroughs, and even had an impact on Western capitalism itself. In the inter-war period, Italy and some other 'semi-peripheries' did in their own way keep their distance from the world system. The worldwide expansion of the system had already reached such a pitch that the weak capitalist economies had scarcely any choice. The populisms and fascisms of the epoch, with their objectives of autarky, were a kind of response to the challenge. Germany, weakened by the defeat of 1918, went in the same direction, but with the expectation of a challenge through war to the inter-imperialist balance that was unfavourable to Germany.

It is doubtful if such an option would be possible today. Arrighi has already commented that if the Mediterranean economies (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey) responded to the crisis of 1930 by an autarkic withdrawal, this kind of response would now be denied them after three decades of intensification of their development in a world, Atlantic and European mould.[8] This appears undeniable to us and is the very reason why, as we have shown above, delinking for the North makes sense only to the degree in which the society opts for a beginning of socialist transformation, which would clash with the constraint of the world system operating through the skew of 'competitiveness'.

Doubtless too, in the crisis phases, the behaviour of the hegemonic centres is not exactly the same as that of the other centres. The hegemonic power of the moment is the only one who can play the game of worldwide expansion to its end. The others are obliged either to keep their distance (imperial protection, etc.), or to bend the knee. This imbalance is even more marked today: the United States decides, Europe willy-nilly rallies round and submits. The imbalance suggests to André Frank that there is only one 'national' bourgeoisie, that of the hegemonic power, and all the others are to varying degrees subordinate. This conclusion seems forced. First for the reason that hegemony is characteristic only of moments of capitalist history, Great Britain's from 1815 to 1880, the United States' from 1945 to 1970. Hegemony has never prevented the rise of opponents and in the end a challenge to it. If worldwide expansion at the current stage no longer permits the emergence of new centres, the centres established at an earlier stage are not susceptible to being 'disintegrated' and 'compradorized' as the peripheries are. The earlier national construction has established an irrevocable reality.

Other purported attempts at delinking have taken place in the contemporary Third World. Their apparent failure and the re-establishment of order under way have also given rise to an opinion that 'delinking' is impossible. The analogy and the conclusions are too hasty, since worldwide expansion operates under very different circumstances in the peripheries.

Capitalist expansion has directly inverse effects in the centres and in the peripheries of the system: it integrates the societies in the former, founds or eventually reinforces the nation there, but in the latter it disintegrates the society, fragments it, alienates it, and eventually destroys the nation or destroys

its potential. This imbalance as to the economic basis of the system seems to us quite essential. It reflects the qualitatively different position of the local bourgeoisies in the local and world system, which is not only a matter of quantitative degree. It is a manifestation of the unequal character of capitalist development and at the origin of the transition beyond capitalism initiated from its peripheries.

Was this law confirmed in the long period (from 1945 to 1970) of expansion after the Second World War? Many would deny it, either in a general way, or by pointing to exceptions. The general denial of the contradictory character of the capitalist movement is based on the evident fact of the general growth rate. Bill Warren, among others, sets out simple economic statistics without great significance.[9] For a response to this question requires a political analysis of the social forces of the state and their strategies, and the forms of integration in the world system, that eludes the bourgeois theory according to which economic growth homogenizes the world and makes it uniform at all levels, even when the theory is clothed in ostensibly Marxist language.

We have pointed out elsewhere that the growth from 1945 to 1970 created an illusion of the possibility of the construction of new centres, and established a definition of autonomy of national bourgeois hegemony (control of reproduction of the labour force, the market, the centralization of surplus, technology and natural resources). The illusion is the more remarkable for the fact that the phase is precisely defined by the political victory of the liberation movements in Asia and Africa, who seized independence, proceeded with the setting up of a local state and often embarked upon 'anti-feudal' reforms. This apparent progress in the constitution of autonomous bourgeois hegemonies does not call for strategies of delinking. On the contrary, almost throughout the globe, in Latin America, in Africa and the Arab world, in Asia, this expansion is accompanied by a relative intensification of external exchanges, an increase in imports of technology and even of private capital (associated with the penetration of multinationals) and public capital (external public debt), despite the – normal – fact that re-export of profits cancels out or even exceeds the flow of financial inputs. The most radical advances in this direction – self-styled as 'socialist' – are based on a reinforcement of the state's role and frequently on Soviet support, for conjunctural reasons of the conflict with imperialism. But even there one can scarcely speak of a strategy of delinking, even when conjuncturally the intensity of relations with the West has been diminished.

The crisis has revealed the extreme fragility of these attempts at the very moment when, on the 'anti-Third-World' helter-skelter, so many commentators were rushing to bury the concepts of centre and periphery, the analysis of unequal development, etc. With surprising ease, the 'socialist' experiences were dismantled, sometimes evidently through the mobilization of the West's policemen for the purpose. Through the Camp David agreements and the invasion of Lebanon, the surrender of the Front Line countries in Southern Africa, begun by Mozambique, the whole of the Arab world and Africa was brought into line. This is further confirmation of the schema we have put forward of attempts at autocentric development of the periphery looking like a

long series of successive abortions, brutally arrested before term by an acute crisis in the external balance occasioned by the reflux of superprofits appropriated by dominant central capital. Is not the external debt – nowadays a conventional proof (but a total denial of the World Bank forecasts of development 'fuelled by external demand', forecasts that were quickly embraced by Warren-style anti-Third Worlders) – the contemporary form of this murderous drain of surplus?

It is clearly understood and nobody denies it that capitalist expansion in the 1945–70 years in the Third World has been unequal in the extreme and has taken multiple forms. In this sense, saying that the Third World does not exist since it is not homogeneous, is not a new discovery – since it never was uniform – nor an answer to the question whether, apart from its heterogeneity, it will cross the stepping stones to lead it to become 'analogous' to the centres of the system.

The question of the state and its relation to the nation and to its social components comes to the forefront of a concrete analysis of the forms of peripheralization. Generally speaking we are brought back to the proposition supported above that the formation of nations is limited in time and space and is in no way a 'general' product of capitalism. How many of the Third World states of today bear even a vague resemblance to nation-states? With the exception of pluri-national India, peripheral capitalism in expansion does not operate as a force dictating a bringing together, or fusion, of nearby quasi-nations, neither in Spanish-speaking America nor in the Arab world. Rather the reverse, as one sees in the latter instance, the closer world integration that oil revenues occasioned pushed back pan-Arab prospects. In Africa, the crude form of neo-colonialism has even broken up the former broader colonial groupings. And this offers no advantage of more homogeneous small units: the small African states are as heterogeneous as the big ones. The incapability of opting for unifying national languages and the concomitant and anomalous retention of linguistic duality (the foreign language – English, French or Portuguese – being designated as 'national', even when it is spoken by only a tiny minority) makes it impossible to speak of nations here.

The new stage of worldwide expansion causes the disappearance of the last traces of social classes recognizable by their position as defined in the local social formation. The ruling classes are no more than subordinate and powerless transmission belts for worldwide capital. But the popular classes themselves lose their identity (working class, small peasantry, etc.) to blend into an ill-defined mixture. The very kind of extraverted development under way calls for this 'molecular' form in the new social structure. The example of tourism and its effects highlights this: seasonal wage employees who are also small peasants, multiple social roles are on the up and up. The intra-Arab migration is another example suggesting the hypothesis of a juxtaposition of rentier (oil-producer) states to infra-rentier states (living on the redistribution of revenue).[10] Workers in the free zones constitute a segment of a class spread through the world by direct domination of exploitative capital. An increasing proportion of the new petty bourgeoisie of officials and employees comes

within the same situation of segmentation. Can these classes and social groups, fragmented and fragmentary, make the transition from the status of class in itself to a class for itself? This seems to us very unlikely in the absence of a political struggle where the state may be at stake. The mature formation of classes occurs in this framework, when there is a correlation of state, nation, social struggles and political struggles. The non-correlation between state, nation (which is often non-existent), social classes (dispersed and fragmented in the world) cancels out the effectiveness of politics. In our opinion this loss of effectiveness explains the rise of populisms and ideological irrationalities. The petty bourgeois employee of IBM in Germany, in Senegal and in Indonesia cannot develop a common class consciousness. In Senegal or in Indonesia he might perhaps fill this vacuum by a wretched juxtaposition: being at one and the same time alienated in the firm and its technology but a religious fundamentalist. But the same might be true for the factory worker, the unemployed in the shanty-town, the peasant–labourer–employee, etc.

These negative factors together explain the success of the recompradorization under way at the level of the Third World.

Are there exceptions? It is fairly clear that the forms of development in eastern Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) reveal particular characteristics that distinguish them greatly from the rest of the Third World. At first these developments, especially in Korea and Taiwan, were based on significant agrarian reforms (certainly for fear of contagion from the communist model) reinforced by the peculiarly egalitarian sensibility of Confucian ideology. Whereas in Latin America, Brazil in particular, the Arab countries and South and South-East Asia, the internal market has been extended by a comparatively higher income for the middle strata to the detriment of the mass of the people, here in a highly unusual way, wages as a whole (including those of the middle strata) have been maintained at a minimal level, allowing for substantial savings, largely public, and for peasant incomes to remain reasonable. In the Chinese states of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, a close collaboration has been established with what one might call the overseas Chinese bourgeoisie, spreading throughout the western Pacific and South-East Asia. In demographic aspects, Confucian Asia has reached modest growth levels that indicate greater social control and greater penetration of the ideology of individual and family enrichment. Finally, attempts at technical education have been much more systematic and effective. On the basis of a strong national reality, these developments come much closer than elsewhere to the emergence of a hegemonic national bourgeoisie, legitimated by a fairly broad social consensus.

For the rest the crisis reveals the vulnerability of strategies based on deliberate integration in the international division of labour. Confucian Asia, more skilled than Latin America or the Arab world at social control of the readjustments imposed by the external crisis (notably the debt burden), is doubtless able if necessary to withdraw in upon itself. An intensification of relations with China and Japan might provide a substitute that was profitable to all the partners and have a noticeable effect on world balances.

The recompradorization underway at the level of the Third World as a whole is nevertheless bound to clash with the rise of popular movements. It is not surprising that the populist form is confused and founded on ambivalent ideologies. It is evidence of the broad character of an alliance of classes themselves unsure of their determination, denied their autonomy and consciousness of class for itself. But this is not to say that it is less effective as a force for disintegration of the world order, or that it could not under certain circumstances evolve into positive revolutionary constructions.

Without succumbing to the often futile exercise of 'scenarios', we suggest that positive constructions entail the combination of three conditions. First, delinking as we have defined it, that is strict subjection of external relations in all fields to the logic of internal choices without regard to the criteria of world capitalist rationality. Second, political capacity to introduce profound social reforms in an egalitarian direction. The latter is also a precondition for delinking, since the hegemonic classes *in situ* have no interest in it, and a possible consequence of it, since it evidently implies transfers of political hegemony. Delinking has little chance of coming about without reform, and if it occurs conjuncturally it will end up at an impasse. Third, capacity for technological absorption and ingenuity, without which the autonomy of decision that has been won cannot be put into effect. It is clear that such a capacity cannot be developed through a few educational tricks; it implies an ideological opening up.

With such a definition of the conditions for a positive response to history's challenge they may appear to demand an impossible combination. It is certainly not looming in the immediate future, but is it not at least on the horizon for such countries as Brazil or India?

The transnationalization of Brazil occurred essentially at the level of finance and not of trade. Brazilian growth, contrary to the erroneous ideological statements of the World Bank, was not 'fuelled by external demand' (Brazil's exports, which at their peak were ten per cent of GDP, fell to five per cent). Repudiation of the external debt would be fairly easy and the reprisals would be more costly to the partners than to Brazil. The obstacle to change is internal, since growth was based upon increasing inequality. But the popular and democratic forces seem here, in one way or another (perhaps populist), to have reversed the trend.

The relation India has with the world system is even less constringent. 'Dependence' in the commercial, technological and financial sense is limited. But it is mediated above all at political and ideological levels by the hegemony inherited from the liberation movement. Will the Congress crisis open the way to supersession of the handicap?

Do these historical potentials – reinforcing those of China and perhaps the whole of eastern Asia – suggest that 'size' is the decisive factor of the areas that can free themselves in this way? It is certainly a significantly favourable factor. But an examination of the character of the state and its relations with the component nation or nations will take the analysis a step further. The state of Brazil – quasi-national nowadays – whose roots and traditions are unbroken,

the success of the multinational Indian state, outstanding in the history of decolonization, are trump cards.

But one may perhaps find such trumps in medium-sized or even small countries. National homogeneity and strong popular expression may explain some popular responses to the crisis, from Nicaragua to Burkina Faso. Delinking here means reducing a vulnerability inherent in the very circumstances of a small nation, and strengthening popular unity through reforms, albeit modest ones.

Obviously the current phase of the crisis may also be overcome in a new phase of capitalist expansion by subjection of the peripheral regions to the logic of this expansion. This may even be the case, to some extent at least. There is no reason why history in the future should not follow the model initiated in 1917, through the concomitance of limited rupture and worldwide expansion with a shrinking gap.

The Arab and African regions, among others, seem at the moment scarcely capable of responding positively to the crisis. The crude Euro-American neo-colonialism to which Africa is subjected, its break-up into non-national states, manipulation by the powers that be of ethnic and religious heterogeneities, etc. make the continent extremely weak. In the Arab world, corruption associated with oil revenues, the illusory 'compensation' provided by the neurotic recall of 'special characteristics' – religion among others – have already deferred the unitary and socialist plan to the Greek kalends. An equilibrium made up of marginalized regions, abandoned to famine and despair (one thinks of the Sahel), and poles of limited 'prosperity', associated with oil or mining revenues and their redistribution, is not an impossible prospect. In Latin America, if circumstances permitted, the implementation of the American plan of 'buying back the external debt' by the transfer of ownership of industries and mines to dominant capital would cancel out a century of nationalist struggles and deepen the compradorization of the continent.

Ideological and political preparation of a response to the offensive of the North against the peoples of the South requires three axes of action.

First, strengthening of the unity of the Third World, and of its national and regional components. The greatness of Kwame Nkrumah and his call for Pan-Africanism, which in his day made some laugh and condemned him to the ferocious hatred of others, can now more than ever before be recognized as a clear-sighted awareness of the frailty of a fragmented Africa.

Second, progress for democracy and respect for collective rights, whether of (ethnic, religious, etc.) 'minorities', or of the popular classes (political and trade union rights, etc.). The objective need to provide the Third World with great economic, political and military scope, as the sole means of intervening effectively in the contemporary world and winning respect as a genuine partner, entails the renunciation of the narrow ideology of nation as it has been inherited from 19th century Europe. The idea of unification by force from local Prussias and Piedmonts, ignoring regional differences and imposing, even on minorities, linguistic and administrative homogenization, does not correspond to the realities of contemporary Africa and the Third World. The rights of

peoples and nations to self-determination, including their right to secession, must be tempered by outlooks sympathetic to the constitution in appropriate forms of great 'multinational' states, democratic and mindful of differences. This is the only way to checkmate the imperialist plans that always aim to divide. In Africa and the Middle East in particular, South Africa and Israel openly plan to 'bantustanize' or 'Lebanonize' to an infinite degree, counting on 'tribes' and 'religious communities' and refusing to see what, beyond their differences, unites the African peoples and the Arab peoples. The 'human rights' campaigns, manipulated for the further infinite break-up of the Third World states or to provide moral justification for direct or indirect imperialist interventions, must be countered by these unitary and democratically inspired struggles.

Third, strategic consciousness that the peoples of the periphery must be self-reliant. Neither a possible Soviet alliance, nor still less illusions about Europe for example, could mitigate shortcomings in the fields of delinking, internal reform and mutual support. With some justification at the tactical level, these alliances and compromises will be of no strategic value until, through the joint efforts of the peoples, the overall world system has been refashioned.

The concept of delinking

The crisis of development, within the general crisis of the world system, has led to the questioning of development strategies 'open to the exterior' and based on deeper participation in the international division of labour. In this context, the expression 'delinking' has gained currency and is more widely used each day. As is often the case, the wider usage has been accompanied by a gradual debasement of its meaning. The expression has generally become a virtual synonym of absolute or relative 'autarky', that is withdrawal from external commercial, financial and technological exchanges.

We have in the past supported and continue to support the thesis according to which the relative term 'under-development' is the obverse of 'development', that is, the one and the other are two sides of the – naturally unequal – expansion of capital. Development of the countries on the periphery of the world capitalist system must therefore come through an essential 'rupture' with that system, a 'delinking' or refusal to subject the national development strategy to the imperatives of 'worldwide expansion'. But the meaning we give to the concept of 'delinking' is in no way synonymous with autarky. The meaning is as follows: pursuit of a system of rational criteria for economic options founded on a law of value on a national basis with popular relevance, independent of such criteria of economic rationality as flow from the dominance of the capitalist law of value operating on a world scale.

The aim of this section is:

– to make this definition more explicit and illustrate it through a comparative schema;

– to show that development strategies founded on one rather than the other of these forms of the law of value lead to completely different results;
– to explore some of the relations between this alternative choice and the issue of 'external relations' (or autarky).

We shall draw on the arguments of part one of our book on Maoism,[11] where we have considered this issue in detail. Here we shall give only a simplified schema, shorn of the technical steps of the argument, and recommend readers who are interested to consult the full text.

We are trying to compare two strategies. The first is founded on the political option of autocentric national development starting from abolition of the dominant forms of private ownership of land and factories, and taking agriculture as its base, that is, not envisaging any forced appropriation from the peasants to 'hasten industrialization' and opting for the most egalitarian possible income distribution (notably between rural earnings and workers' pay). The second is founded on the laws of capital accumulation in a class society integrated in the international division of labour, where the comparative profitability of economic options is judged on the basis of the world capitalist law of value as the best indicator of efficiency.

In the two cases under comparison, it is assumed that one starts out (year 0) in the same situation, that of an underdeveloped country, still largely rural (80 per cent of the population), with backward agriculture and embryonic industrialization.

In what follows we show the two structures from the start (year 0), according to whether they are founded on a) the law of value on a national basis with popular relevance; or b) the world capitalist law of value.

It is granted that one must give every product (whether capital goods or consumer goods, outputs by the rural or urban populations, marketed or self-consumed) a 'price' and labour time is taken as the unit of measurement of value.

To choose 'the law of value on a national basis with popular relevance' means that one ensures that the net output of the society (the value added or total output after deduction of productive consumption), taken as equal to 100 (billions of monetary units), is shared between the rural and urban sectors in proportion to their input in quantity of labour (taken as equal to their proportion in the population, say 80 and 20). One will infer from this political option the pricing system (for wheat, a metre of cotton textile, a kilo of fertilizer, etc.) and corresponding wages system (annual pay).

To choose 'the world capitalist law of value' means taking the 'reference price' on which to found the rationality of development options from the system of dominant prices, those that reflect the levels of productivity achieved in the developed countries. One measures the productivity of the labourer in a sector by dividing the value added in this sector by the number of labourers engaged in the sector under consideration. With this measurement, productivity is lower for agriculture and industry (and services) in the Third World in comparison with that of the developed countries. But it is unequally

lower. In industry and services as a whole it is one third; that is the quotient. of value added in industry and services divided by the numbers employed. with 100 as the base for the OECD countries together, gives an index of 33 for the countries of the Third World together. By contrast in agriculture. the ratio is ten (for the developed countries) to one (for the Third World countries). So if one adopts the system of reference prices of developed capitalism, the value added per head in the underdeveloped countries is three times higher in the urban sector than it is in the rural sector. The terms agriculture and industry are used here in an illustrative sense. No less significant differentials of productivity distinguish the so-called 'informal' urban output from that in the modern sectors. On the basis of a classification in 20 branches, the average variations in productivity range from one to three for the developed countries and from one to 25 for those of the Third World.

The table below summarizes the differences in the structures corresponding to the two options for the law of value. for the same country in year 0:

	Population	*Value added*		*Value added per head*	
		Law of value national & popular	*Law of value capitalist world*	*Law of value national & popular*	*Law of value capitalist world*
Rural	80	80	57	1.00	0.71
Urban	20	20	43	1.00	2.15
Total	100	100	100	1.0	1.00

The major difference we wanted to draw out in the foregoing is independent of the class structure and distribution of value added that results from it.

Obviously one could adduce even more marked variations between the two models if one brought in the factor of class structures. A 'popular relevance' for the first model supposes as equal a distribution as possible for the peasants. around the national average of 1.00. and as equal a distribution as possible. around the same average. for all the urban wage-earners. with differentials justifiable here only on the individual basis of the quantity and quality (and skill) of the labour. By contrast, if we consider the reality of the capitalist Third World, we shall find: 1) two-fifths of the net output of agriculture appropriated in the rent to the landholders; and 2) a division of urban income into three equal parts: a third to wages and income of low-skilled workers (themselves three-quarters of the actively employed), a third to the middle strata (a quarter of the actively employed) and a third to the heading of income on the ownership and capital.

In these circumstances, in relation to the national average of 1.00, the average income of the peasants falls to 0.60, that of the urban workers to 0.43, while that of the middle strata rises to 1.75. These latter proportions are very close to statistically recorded data in various places.

From these two bases, we can show the content and results of the two development strategies at the end of ten years, with one founded on the principles of national and popular value and the other on those of world capitalist value.

To make the comparison valid, we attach common hypotheses to the two models, namely: 1) two per cent annual population growth rate; 2) two per cent annual rise in agricultural productivity (net output per rural worker); 3) three per cent annual rise in industry–services productivity (net output per urban worker); and 4) these productivity rises require in the two models the same scale of investment and a similar growth in productive consumption (in short, the same kinds of technology).

In the popular national strategy, the relative prices of various products are modified (from time to time) to reflect the unequal progress in productivity and the effects of productive consumption in unequal growth. But one ensures that the earnings of peasants and workers – or more generally, as has been shown, the incomes of workers in different sectors, branches, groups of firms or firms with unequal productivity – remain equal between them and one keeps their common growth at the level indicated by global growth, after deduction of the necessary investment. The surplus is centralized by the state and allocated according to the sectoral growth needs. The labour force is also allocated according to the absolute and relative urban growth required by the higher industrial growth.

In our model (detailed justification of which is in the work cited), the proportion of rural population fell from 80 to 70 per cent. When investment needs and growth of productive consumption had been taken into account, the results of the model were as follows: 2.6 per cent annual growth rate in rural output; 10.2 per cent annual growth rate in urban output (made up of 8.6 per cent for consumer goods and 11.0 per cent for capital goods); 4.9 per cent annual growth rate in national income; and four per cent (two per cent per head) annual growth in consumption for the rural and urban population and a similarly evolving structure for the rural and urban shares of this consumption for its various components (food, other necessities . . .).

In the model illustrating implementation of the strategy founded on the world capitalist law of value, we accepted a hypothetical growth in GDP at the same annual rate (4.9 per cent). We also accepted that this result should require the same volume of investment and the same growth in intermediate consumption. This is already weighting the hypothesis favourably since the distortion in favour of middle-class consumption that is characteristic of this strategy entails more capital intensive production options.

Two differences distinguish this strategy from the previous one. One, the labour force is treated as a commodity, full employment is not guaranteed by

the state and the rural exodus is not controlled. Two, the economy, open to the exterior, looks to private capital and external public borrowing in the hope of easing the burden of a national savings effort. But the model shows that the hope is illusory since the reflux of profits and interest – proportional to the external capital accumulated – increases at a higher rate than the GDP. This entails keeping exports at a high rate, as a reflection of the preference accorded to supposed 'comparative advantage'. Nevertheless, we make two further favourable hypotheses: one, the inflow of new capital compensates for the outflow, thereby avoiding any balance of payments crisis; two, the terms of trade remain stable, thus excluding any theory of unequal exchange and heightening of the transfer of value by the inclusion of transfers concealed by the structure of prices. The historical reality is less favourable; so not only have balance of payments crises regularly blocked the process of growth in the periphery (the current debt crisis is only the latest example), but also these crises and the readjustments they demand lead to a deeper participation in the international division of labour on unfavourable terms and are the basis of unequal exchange.

The model produced very different results from the previous one: a) growth in workers' income is virtually nil, and keeps pace only with population growth; and b) by contrast, the annual growth rate in income for the middle classes reaches as high as 6.6 per cent. Here again one has made a favourable hypothesis, namely that spontaneous private saving permitted by this growing inequality in income distribution would largely finance investment and compensate for the reflux of foreign profits. Once more history shows that the inequality encourages parasitic consumption rather than saving, and that the highest rates of collective saving are recorded in the least egalitarian societies.

The model illustrates a kind of development characterized by increasing inequality, that is in fact what one sees all over the Third World. This inequality – inherent in the options pursued – is only the reflection of the law of capital accumulation operating on a world scale. Development here is essentially fuelled by two forces: one, external demand that makes exports possible, as a condition for the import of the necessary means of production and reimbursement of borrowed capital; two, consumer demand of the middle classes who batten on the growth.

Like any model, these two are illustrations. In themselves they do not show why such an option is pursued, under what social and ideological determinants. They do not have some magic power of substitution.

The first model is of national and popular autocentric development. It does not mean total renunciation of any relations with the exterior, but subjecting external relations to the logic of an internal development that is independent of them. This option leads to attaching much less decisive significance to apparent 'comparative advantage' and thereby, when other things are equal, tends to reduce the volume of commodity exchanges. The care taken to ensure equilibrium of the various outputs – agricultural and industrial – reduces the likelihood of deficit such as a food deficit, etc. That is why delinking is so often

confused with autarky. However, the inadequate endowment in natural – mineral – resources, especially for medium sized and small countries, technological backwardness and the difficulty of producing sophisticated capital goods for themselves makes importing imperative, and hence exporting to pay for it. But the strategy sees this as a 'necessary evil' and tries to reduce its effects and burden.

The second model in contrast highlights the close bond between the class structure and the option for extraverted development. The middle classes benefit from this option, and the external vulnerability of their development is an acceptable constraint.

The first path, some will say, is that of socialism and the second that of capitalism. We are more subtle. The first path is one of national and popular development that may lead to socialism. But the path remains open for evolution in that direction and/or in the direction of constituting a new class power. Undoubtedly the latter 'deviation' would entail a gradually more marked inequality in income distribution, albeit without a return to private ownership of the means of production. But in turn 'equality' is not a sufficient condition for socialist development. The question of the workers' effective control over the places of production and in the political society goes much further than that of 'income distribution'. Moreover, even in the hypothesis of a blockage in the evolution and the constitution of a new ruling class, the distortions in development will be less severe than in the capitalist model so long as the criteria of choice remain national (national law of value) and one refuses to base them on 'international values'. For – and we cannot say this strongly enough – the prime basis of the distortion, its key aspect, is a function of the distance separating a system of national values from the system of the worldwide expansion of the capitalist law of value. The constitution of a new class structure would certainly imply the adoption of 'international values', be it only through the prestigious model of the middle-class lifestyle of the capitalist world.

The question of technology must be reconsidered in the context of these options. Delinking does not imply rejection of all foreign technology, simply for being foreign, in the name of some culturalist nationalism. But it certainly does imply an awareness that technology is not neutral, either in terms of social relations of production, or in terms of models of living and consumption. Priority given to the involvement of the whole country, the entire people, in the process of change dictates a mix of modern technologies (possibly imported) and renovation and improvement of traditional technologies. By contrast the extraverted option most definitely encourages total alienation in the technology of advanced capitalism.

Finally, delinking is in no way synonymous with a refusal to participate in world scientific and ideological currents. Nostalgic culturalist nationalism is a symptom of the crisis and not an answer to it. It indicates the powerlessness of societies at an impasse who have not yet found a way of effectively bringing together renovation and historical continuity.

The tactical plan: delinking or a better world order? A non-metaphysical opposition

The analyses put forward in the foregoing of what we believe to be the inevitable connection between delinking and socialist construction provide an ineluctable strategic framework. This is because the capitalist system is by nature a worldwide system and the worldwide expansion is not a uniform process. Unequal development within capitalist expansion implies an eventual supersession of the system only on the basis of ruptures achieved on its periphery, with all the sub-clauses this entails.

Any policy that ignores this strategic outlook, and replaces the view of socialist delinking with one of a 'new world order', even if it be a 'better' one, runs the risk of harbouring illusions.

The prime insistence on the strategy does not preclude tactical considerations, as without these the strategy remains an abstract theory. Tactical considerations must be included for many obvious reasons. The principal reason is that the peoples of the periphery are not equally ripe for the beginning of a socialist delinking. Meanwhile they must cope with capitalist worldwide expansion and struggle to ensure that its modalities are the least damaging to the eventual ripening of their liberation. This is the basis of articulation of the various secondary contradictions between rival imperialist centres, between the dependent bourgeoisies of the periphery, between the interests of countries that have gone through a socialist revolution and the countries of the capitalist system, etc. An effective policy is one that succeeds in mobilizing these contradictions in favour of the long-term interests of the peoples of the South.

Renouncing the move in this direction and adopting an attitude of making the best of a bad job means putting the peoples of the periphery in mortal danger, in the full sense of the word. For capitalist expansion does not only mean economic compradorization of the peripheralized societies, but also, as history shows, 'white' expansion and destruction of 'non-European' cultures.[12] Genocide against marginalized populations, beginning with the American Indians and the slave trade, forced assimilation and massive deculturation, technological impoverishment and chronic famine are landmarks in the history of capitalism from its outset and are still before our eyes (see the fate meted out to the Palestinians and to the Blacks in South Africa). It is therefore essential to act to protect the future interests of humankind from the threat of Euro-capitalist savagery.

In the short term the task is to try to modulate the evolution of the world system in the direction of a 'better world order', that is less inegalitarian (in economic, cultural, political and military aspects) at the level of international balances and the level of internal social relations within the various societies. For a multipolar world this must be the immediate objective.

We shall try here to examine under what circumstances a realistic policy of this kind can be pursued in the current crisis.

There can be two families of attitude in the face of the crisis. There are some

who believe that the first thing to do is 'solve the crisis', 'escape it', and who set out their proposals in a package that they believe to be the most effective means of finding this solution. There are some who think this way of looking at things futile. For the crisis is of long duration and inevitable in the history of capitalism. One cannot 'escape it' by mere wishful thinking. The real question is not 'how to escape the crisis', but 'how to act in the crisis'. It is the conjunction of these actions that will shape the outcome and determine the structure of the world of the future. As the Italian PDUP put it in a fine polemical phrase summarizing the dilemma: escape from the crisis of capitalism or escape from capitalism in crisis?

Having already pronounced elsewhere on the nature of this crisis the overall analysis will not be repeated here but merely an illustration of it, with a critique of the viewpoint of those who seek to 'escape the crisis'. To do so we shall take the proposals that seem to us the most coherent offered by the European left, Stuart Holland's Out of Crisis Project and the two reports of the Brandt Commission.[13]

Our methodological starting point is that the proposals envisaged for an 'escape from the crisis' evidently depend not only on the analysis one makes of its character and mechanisms, but also on the social and national interests one favours. Technical and economic constraints operate in these frameworks but do not define them; they are never 'absolute' but always relative.

The professional economists always put forward one of two apparently contradictory explanations for the crisis. A crisis in demand and a crisis in supply. For some, then, the crisis arises because income distribution does not allow the purchase of the production of consumer goods on supply, hence a cutback in this production and upstream of that of production of capital goods. This analysis spontaneously evokes a 'Keynesian' remedy: raise the level of eventual demand through appropriate redistribution and broader social rights. But for others, the crisis arises quite differently as income distribution is too high and leaves an insufficient margin of profit to encourage investment.

The apparent – and in our view superficial – contradiction is removed when one looks more closely at what income is being talked about: wages of earners at the centre (workers, middle classes, etc.), income distribution at the periphery (returns on natural resources, workers' pay, middle strata incomes, peasant earnings, etc.), at the profits in which sector of activity and of which enterprises (those that suffer most from international competition for example?).

It is difficult to sustain the view that this crisis arises from deficiency of wages distributed in the advanced centres. It was the case in 1930, since that crisis followed a long series of workers' defeats. The Keynesian remedy, appropriate to imperial expansion and super-exploitation, had then a certain, limited effectiveness. By contrast, our crisis arises at the end of a long period of exceptional growth on the basis of a strong position of the working class, at the end then of a long period of almost full employment and parallel growth in pay and productivity, which has reduced the flexibility of the system and consequently hampers its inevitable restructuring. A policy of the Keynesian

kind, even at the scale of all the OECD countries (to avoid the effect of its implementation by only one of the partners encountering the constraint of possible damage to external relations) is therefore impossible. The rise of corporatism and the associated political paralysis are only a reflection of this absence of flexibility.

The logical capitalist response to this situation is a response of the right. It comes in the introduction of lasting unemployment that allows the gradual erosion of workers' pay. On this 'healthier' basis, a new model of accumulation – the 'Reaganite' model – can find its booming opportunities. The technological base of this model is provided by the new non-Fordist industries replacing the model of the generalization of Fordism through the expansion of mass production industries that fuelled the 1945–70 phase of upsurge. These new high-technology activities, with robot labour, based on a significant new 'fourth sector', constitute the material base of new middle strata whose expansion will fuel the new accumulation. It is therefore a model founded on heightened inequality, notably between manual workers of Fordist sectors in a relative retreat and the new middle classes.

Undoubtedly such a model would not be implemented 'collectively' by the OECD countries, but through harsh competition among them, each trying to come out best. This strategy is convenient to the United States, and permits the 'counter-attack' underway with the aim of restoring a declining hegemony. It could be pursued without too much bother by Japan, thanks to its technological trump cards. But the longer-term fragility of that country should not be underestimated. The strategy is acceptable for small countries that can find an adequate beachhead – such as Sweden. For countries such as Britain or France, or even Germany, and *a fortiori* the other European partners (Italy, Spain), it offers no future. It is hardly likely that by joining in this race to modernize within and through international competition, Britain and France could even slow down their century-long decline.

The model also entails relations of inequality, renewed and intensified between the North and the South. Eventual export to the South, dominated by Fordist industries and enjoying even lower wages, with guarantee of access to its natural resources would facilitate implementation of the model. This is, moreover, the basis of the common offensive underway from the North to recompradorize by subjection to the dictates of the IMF and the Club of Ten. It is typical that in this offensive Europe is not in tow. For such countries in decline as Britain and France, this maximum relation of super-exploitation over their neo-colonies provides a means of mitigating inability to compete with the technology majors. The neo-colonial approach of the EEC during the negotiations of Lomé III is evidence of this.[14]

But this offensive against the South runs directly counter to redistribution on a world scale in its favour. It implies neither betterment of the fate of the peoples of the South, nor even redistribution in favour of its bourgeoisies, but the reverse.

Income distribution at the centre is not the only ingredient of demand in a system that is more and more worldwide. If one has to speak nowadays of

low-pay for workers, is it not primarily the wages of workers in the industries of Brazil and the mines of Africa, and the earnings of Third World peasants? Behind every super-exploited worker stand ten peasants whose penury permits the reproduction of the overall labour force. To these forms of super-exploitation must of course be added the superprofits derived from free or virtually free access to the natural resources of the Third World, etc.

The current crisis arises mainly from this distortion, on a world scale, in the price of labour power, which sets limits on the kind of peripheral and world development. That is why we have called it a crisis of imperialism. That is why the best palliatives that have so far reduced the breadth of the crisis at the centre are those that have resulted in a redistribution, of a limited and mediocre kind, in favour of the South. Have not the recycling of petrodollars and the massive indebtedness of the periphery prevented an even more marked fall in world trade? The readjustments the West imposes through the IMF, in addition to entailing the risk of a financial crash, serve to aggravate the crisis by reducing demand from the Third World. That is why, as André Frank has said, we are only in the first moments of the phase, and 1929 and its consequences is still to come. The argument that African indebtedness had benefited European industries was advanced; but that did not prevent the EEC partners imposing on the African, Caribbean and Pacific associated states the neo-colonial Lomé III Convention that refused to consider rescheduling of the debt.

The crisis in North–South relations is the backbone of the global crisis, in the sense that the 'solutions' envisaged are mainly defined (and classifiable as right or left) by the outlook they have on the evolution of these relations.

The response of the right is logical and coherent. That of the left cannot be so until it takes the form of a revision of North–South relations and draws the appropriate conclusions for 'internal' policies in the North.

The right's response is to bring on the priority restoration of a greater profit margin for the benefit of worldwide capital. Capital as a whole accepts worldwide expansion and prefers second place in the global system – if it is too weak to try for more – to domination of a national space at the price of 'autarky' (or, more lightly in fact, protectionism). This choice explains the general hostility to 'protectionism' on the grounds that it would necessarily ensure the survival of inefficient sectors, etc. It explains the recurring argument in terms of requirements of the 'constraint' of international competition. It is the basis of Europe's rallying to the Atlantic alliance. The 'nation' has by now lost the supreme reference value it once had. Any plan for the redeployment of capital comes within the worldwide expansion, hence the sacrosanct character of the European construction, the Atlantic alliance, etc. This response from the right implies priority internally for the battle against inflation to the detriment of employment and the maintenance of domestic demand. For international competitiveness is eroded for such rivals as are less efficient at this battle.

This response of the right also implies a 'putting into order' at world level through systematic subordination of the peripheral bourgeoisies, wiping out the scope for autonomy they have been able to carve out in the preceding period. Recompradorization is the aim of the unified offensive of the North

against the South. Here too the cornered bourgeoisies have no choice: they can only submit, accept the 'tidying up' plans and make their populations pay the price of the superprofits demanded by dominant capital.

On to this major North–South conflict, backbone of the crisis, the tactic of counter-attack to restore American hegemony craftily grafts the blackmail of East–West conflict. We refer the reader to our analyses of this articulation put forward elsewhere.

In short, the rightist policy response to the crisis does not only seek an escape but also to act in the crisis to shape social relations on a world scale to the profit of the dominance of worldwide capitalism.

Are the corresponding proposals of the Western left coherent and credible? If one judges by Stuart Holland's work, the proposals are a plan for Keynesian intervention from the West, with appropriate reforms and within a framework that takes account of the demand for worldwide expansion: reflation, 'competitive' restructuring, redistribution of resources and broader social rights. The plan envisages, starting from Europe under a government of the left, extension by stages to the whole of Europe then to the whole of the North (Europe, United States and Japan), thus safeguarding the opening to the exterior. Should one draw any conclusion from the fact that the treatment in question virtually overlooks North–South ties, and is content in a few lines to let it be understood that return to prosperity for the North will *ipso facto* entail a fresh start for development in the South? Giving it the benefit of the doubt, one should bear in mind that the Holland report is complementary to the two Brandt Commission reports, based on the world system and finding room for North–South relations. But the critique we made of these reports was precisely in regard to North–South relations, as they showed such timidity as to be virtually indistinguishable from the outlook of 'capitalist redeployment' towards a compradorized South.

This range of proposals, despite the attractiveness of some (favouring a less unequal distribution in the North and expansion of the social field), seems to us to evade some of the major contradictions. First, there is no scope for a Keynesian policy in the North, even as a whole, for the reasons shown above. Alternative relations with the South, less unequal and exploitative, entail a degree of austerity in the North and not the myth of the resumption of indefinite growth.[15] This austerity could be turned into a positive force, if it was not understood like the austerity policies of the right (making the workers pay to retrieve the same development), but as the precondition for the beginning of an 'alternative' local and world development. Furthermore there is no reason to think that it is possible for the same policy to be implemented throughout the West. Immediately the countries where the social forces permit it will encounter the rivalry of those where politics of the right prevail. Any new breakthrough towards an 'alternative development' (broader social rights, etc.) will enter into contradiction with a 'restructuring based on competitiveness'.

The timidity of the proposals reveals perhaps a concern with achieving a rapid 'return to office'. But should not one wonder if it is better to be in government, powerless and condemned to handle the crisis with a policy so

close to that of the right as to be scarcely distinguishable, or to be in opposition strengthening the labour movement's resistance to the policy and initiating the mustering for 'alternative development'? We do not think the tactics proposed will have any effect.

A move to the left has further implications. Parts of the existing responses go in this direction: the programme of Swedish social-democracy for transferring ownership of capital, which could provide the basis for an alternative industrial policy, detached from financial profitability; the programme of the PDUP in Italy, which puts the accent on 'alternative development' and broadening of non-commodity opportunities; some ingredients of the programme of the Greens in Northern Europe envisaging the decentralization of economic and social activities; the proposals of Pasok in Greece over North–South relations. In France, the critique of the shift to the right in the socialist experience, as it is formulated by the CERES group or Alain Lipietz,[16] expresses the same belief, by insisting on the priority for autocentric national construction. Such guidelines, with systematic underpinning, offer a genuine terrain for revision of North–South relations towards support for the option for national and popular autocentric development, that is necessary and possible to the degree that the alternative option here – surrender to the dictates of compradorization – runs directly counter to the immediate interests of the vast majority.

The tactics under consideration constitute a 'policy of broadening the scope for autonomy of states, nations, peoples and exploited classes'.

This broadening of the scope for autonomy can and must benefit the various progressive components of our universe by contributing towards the restoration of scope for: a) popular autonomy to begin a supersession of capitalism in the North; b) autonomy to permit the advance of autocentric, national and popular construction in the South; and c) autonomy to facilitate reformist and popular advances in the East.

Can one ask for more in our time?

It is clearly understood that this policy of broadening of scope clashes with two largely interlinked constraints, capitalist worldwide expansion and crystallization around the hegemonies of the superpowers. It therefore implies delinking in the broadest sense of the term; it is a call for the strongest form of 'non-alignment'.

In the event of success the best that could be hoped for would be a 'conjunction between these various anti-systemic forces', as the foundation of a new effective internationalism. If this conjunction leads in the longer term to socialism or not is for history to determine. Meanwhile, many obstacles make it highly unlikely that this objective can be achieved in its most optimistic totality. The absence of a common strategy for the components, due in part to the absence of a common ideological frame of reference, and in part to the reality of divergent short and medium term interests, leaves the future highly uncertain.

The uncertainty arises as there is no possibility of building a Chinese Wall between long term and immediate strategy and tactics. The interference of the

two plans, their overlapping, leaves open these questions: towards what world is one going? What changes are on the agenda in the actual conflicts and in their prospects? What is at stake in these conflicts? What are the active or passive, actual or potential historical subjects?

There is always room for the widest speculation.

Those of a 'realistic' temperament run the risk of being too caught up in the present, that is, the crisis of American hegemony,[17] the absence of a genuine alternative and a credible candidate to overrule it and consequently prevent the certain success of its counter-attack. Those who, in contrast with the former, are drawn to longer term speculation, albeit intuitively, can already discern the shape of tomorrow's world: whether a Japan–China axis making the Confucian world the centre of this embryonic universe,[18] or the opposition of a Europe–Russia axis and a United States–Japan–China[19] axis breaking up our world in a new polycentrism of great powers. None of this seems to us impossible a priori. But our interest goes further to the perennial question: what is to be done? To act in the direction of maximum polycentrism, avoiding recrystallization around two, three or four poles, and maximizing the scope for the middle and small powers, including the weak peripheral regions incapable immediately of presenting themselves as genuine partners – we are obviously thinking in the first place of the Arabs and Africans. This would seem to us the best political option for our time, the most open to hopeful evolution in the future.

System and anti-system: the inescapable ambivalence of practice

Identifying and defining what one might call anti-systemic forces implies first a definition of the system in question; second a precise indication of the plan of a substitute society that these forces propose; and third, a judgement of the effectiveness of the tactics and strategies of action of these forces in regard to the immediate and to the final objective.

The two traditions inspiring the great movements that have effectively transformed the world in the past century are socialism on one side and nationalism on the other. The socialist tradition, at its outset at least, proposed the abolition of social relations of exploitation. One element of the tradition has evolved towards handling these relations and/or managing them through state intervention. The socialist tradition, when it began at least, was anti-statist in the sense that it viewed the state essentially as the means whereby exploiting classes maintained their domination. The tradition contrasted state and civil society. It has drawn up strategies and tactics that have gradually led to envisaging taking over the state – through means 'legitimated by the system itself or otherwise' – whether to reform it, or to 'destroy' it by replacing it with a new state, expected, as one believed or asserted, to be 'provisional'. The nationalist tradition proposed to bring together a nation or people under foreign oppression, whose development was held to be hampered by this oppression, to seize independence, to revive or build the national state and thus

embark on development pledged to overcome 'backwardness'.

Each of these traditions has won tremendous victories during the past century. Numerous 'socialist' governments have been formed in the developed West, and have sometimes become a mode of normal management by 'swings of government'. 'Socialist' revolutions have triumphed under the banner of Marxism–Leninism. Almost all the peoples of Asia and Africa have gained or regained political independence.

Some would pass harsh judgement on the results achieved. Relations of exploitation have not been abolished either in the developed West or in the 'socialist' states, as soon as one looks further than the tautological formalism that the state, as the essential representative of the collective, cannot be the means and locus of exploitation. Despite the highly unequal results in terms of economic growth, the states of Asia and Africa as a whole have scarcely succeeded in constituting united 'nations', still less succeeded in 'overcoming backwardness'. The gap between North and South has become much wider.

There are 'optimists' – on all sides – who pretend that the results are on the contrary extraordinary. The social-democrats of the West will show that exploitation today has nothing to do with that of the origins of industrialization, that democracy is an irreversible achievement, etc. The communists unperturbed will declare that socialism has been achieved – in Russia, or in China, or in both countries – and that despite possible historical limits, deviations, errors and retreats, there is no longer exploitation but a march of progress. And there are some, as likely to be found in the camp of Third World nationalism as in that of Marxism or liberal bourgeois thought, who declare that, aside from inequalities in the development, the nation-states of the Third World do show such 'development', albeit capitalist, and are therefore on the road to eliminating the legacy of 'under-development'.

It seems to us impossible to enter this discussion without going back to first principles: what is the system that each seeks to transform or destroy?

There are first of all the ideological visions produced by the system itself: a system of development and continual progress to worldwide democracy, a system of nations in constant battle for regional or global domination, a dual system of two blocs, one capitalist and the other socialist, in fundamental opposition. These seem to afford little interest.

For the system, in our view, is both a system of exploitation of labour and of unequal nation-states, indistinguishable from one another. The continual expansion of the domination of capital is the very reason for the constitution of this system of states and of their inequality. The social classes comprising the ingredients of this system have no meaning unless they are situated within the global world reality.

Does this mean that the fundamental character of our history, the most significant feature, is precisely this expansion of worldwide capital? In their various ways, Bill Warren, André Gunder Frank and Charles Bettelheim do argue so. Bettelheim, describing the Russian and Chinese revolutions as 'capitalist', sees them as only a stage – however specific – of this expansion.

Warren sustains the same thesis for the Third World. Frank sees the 'delinkings' as temporary and allowing of later reintegration at a more advanced stage, thus consolidating the inexorable expansion of the system.

The common characteristic of these theses is that they share a vision of a system so strong that it can withstand any plans for its supersession. Neither 'class' politics, nor state politics are really effective in comparison with their declared ambitions. So the categories of capitalism and socialism have no scientific basis and do not correspond to a reality that exists or is 'possible' in the foreseeable future. At best socialism is a desirable utopia. Other categories of current politics are worth little more. How can one contrast 'democracies' and 'authoritarian regimes' if neither can stand up to the inexorable demands of worldwide capitalist expansion?

The confusion in the debate is in our opinion due largely to deficiencies in the theory of the expansion of capital. Marx is partly to blame, for he probably underestimated the worldwide extent of this expansion and insufficiently analysed its mechanisms. Rosa Luxemburg was the first to see this deficiency. One factor seemed to her to demand further explanation: why and how was so-called primitive accumulation not to be found only at the origins of capitalism, but was also pursued in ripe capitalism? She believed she had found the explanation by showing that a pure mode of capitalist production could not operate, but must, in order to reproduce itself, enter into relation with a pre-capitalist milieu as the only possible source of preliminary demand. We were not convinced by this explanation and believe we have shown how concentration is possible in a pure capitalist mode, thanks to the essential intervention of credit.[20] But credit presupposes a state, and in this sense 'pure capitalism', that is, reduced to the components of an economic model, cannot exist. There is no capitalism without a state. But Rosa Luxemburg's mistake is not important. She had put her finger on the spot: noted the permanent concomitance in capitalist expansion of concentration and primitive accumulation. But she did not draw the conclusion that the peripheries subjected in this way to exploitation should 'delink'. In her profound belief that the working class in the West was ripe for socialist revolution, she thought that this would bring a world transformation on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

Lenin went further. As to 'imperialism', he drew the conclusion of a dual evolution through crystallization around revisionist social-democracy in the West, and telescoping of the bourgeois revolution, national liberation and socialist revolution in the Orient. The revolution would begin in the East. But Russia was not a periphery, and here the telescoping affects only the bourgeois–peasant revolution and the socialist revolution, without the element of national liberation. Lenin also believed in a rapid spread and intervention of the Western working classes in the socialist tradition that had begun. The question of delinking was not therefore raised in his time, but later when it became necessary to draw the conclusion of the revolution's failure in the West.

Mao, taking up the issue at this point, brought the virtual triumph of a revolution that was at once peasant–bourgeois, and one of national and

socialist liberation. This revolution, not waiting for help from the working classes of the West, was thereby directly confronted by the problematic of delinking. It was formulated and in our view in an effective manner, that is, as the construction of a development founded on criteria, themselves based on a worker–peasant alliance, and independent of any reference to the law of value as it governs the world capitalist system.

But delinking, imposed by history in these circumstances, leads not to a single path of potential evolution but to two: the socialist path and the path of statism, a new class mode of production (and non-restoration of capitalism). For reasons to do with the deficiencies of Leninism, Russia rapidly slid into the second. For other reasons to do with the incomplete rupture between Maoism and Leninism, China is threatened by a potential evolution of the same kind.[21] But neither of the two paths can be reduced to forms of capitalism, as Charles Bettelheim supposes. Significantly too, Bettelheim ignores the problematic of delinking, gives no indication that like it or not the USSR has delinked and that this is an extremely important factor in understanding the history of its formation, the character of its contradictions and its current impasse.

This theoretical confusion is at the root of the persistence of a fundamental ambivalence about the social character of the USSR. Hence arise two equally misleading positions. Either one accepts that the socialist character is 'primary' here, despite the 'deficiencies'. And then one must accept Moscow's thesis according to which the socialism–capitalism conflict becomes synonymous with the conflict between capitalist states and socialist states. Or alternatively, as the Soviet system is repellent, one falls into a 'moral' condemnation of the global system, putting into the same bag the United States, Europe, the USSR, China and others. For Westerners this kind of moral condemnation may take an ecological form; but aside from the narrow definition, this must be understood as a syndrome of attitudes. The peoples of the South are confronted by a series of interlocking impasses: the new bourgeois powers are unable, in the current stage of worldwide expansion, to move forward into national construction and development; the Soviet and Chinese models at their current impasse do not appear to provide a possible alternative option. Meanwhile, the current stage of worldwide expansion and the associated constitution of bourgeois states, albeit peripheral, prevents any replication of Leninist–Maoist strategies, or at least imposes a new strategy, perhaps within the Maoist succession but taking account of the irreversible evolutions that followed on. This difficulty, if unsurmounted, brings on a moral reaction: condemnation of the system in the name of 'absolute' values generally drawn from the cultural past of the peoples in question, but ineffectual as they are unrelated to the problems the peoples face.

This powerlessness on both sides is at the root of the attraction of an illusory strategy: an attempt to 'rebuild the world system' without coming to the preliminary decomposition through delinking.

So what is most remarkable in historical reality is what is most denied: delinking, like it or not. There is in our opinion every reason to believe that

history will continue in this direction, through further delinking. Not only is this evolution probable and possible, but the most effective strategy is still to join this greatest and most clear-sighted perspective of maximizing the potential of socialist evolution. Disintegration of the system in this way is not a negative phenomenon. On the contrary it is the most advanced form of construction of a genuinely multipolar world; it also provides the objective basis for a new internationalism of peoples, if the various social forces that refuse subjection to the logic of worldwide capitalist expansion can come together to define their minimum shared objectives and offer each other mutual support.

This way of analysing our history necessarily brings up the question of the historical subjects of these transformations on the agenda. The transformations are varying: popular liberation in the South, the only way of achieving what the bourgeois pseudo-liberation has failed to do; reforms in the East, initiating a supersession of the current impasses. The agents of these transformations cannot be the classic 'classes' (working class, exploited peasantry) defined within the framework of the nation-state, nor these classes and nations themselves.

The strategies and tactics of these new historical subjects necessarily imply inevitable ambivalences. In the peripheries, the peasantry may contradictorily aspire to socialism and to capitalist forms; statist reconstruction entailing delinking smashes and rebuilds the embryos of new ruling classes that aspire to crystallize themselves. In the centres, the new interclass forces may both initiate the supersession of capitalism and be recuperated in a new expansion of it. In the countries of the East the popular forces may act contradictorily within the system and against it. These routine proofs merely remind us that the theoretical frontier erected between 'reforms' (equalling recuperation) and 'revolutions' (equalling the absolute guarantee of predetermined evolution) will always be artificial and largely ideological, when it does not merely indicate poverty of polemic.

The possibility of achieving a worldwide classless society is the beacon, the only beacon that in our opinion justifies political action in our time. Never again would ambivalence arise on the issue: 'utopia' or 'historical necessity'. It is, in our opinion, a necessity only in the sense that it is the sole means of preventing the uncontrolled development of the forces of production bringing self-destruction of humankind. But it is not an 'inevitable necessity' that will carve out a path, whatever one does, by some kind of natural law. The terms of the alternative are: socialism or barbarism (and nowadays the self-destruction of humankind).

Is this anything new? Undoubtedly the conflict between worldwide capitalist expansion and the interests of peoples and nations, of their exploited classes, is not in itself new, since it is immanent in capitalist expansion. The conflict, in the final analysis, is only a manifestation of the law of capitalist accumulation: wealth and power at one pole, degradation and poverty at the other, principally in the peripheries. But it has reached a qualitatively new stage that for three-

quarters of a century has entailed the gradual disintegration of the system.

Historical subjects and political forces constitute two groups that are not interchangeable. Anti-systemic strategies and appropriate tactics are not the monopoly of anybody. The constant conflict between the pressure for 'adjustment' to the demands of the worldwide expansion of capital, and those of social interests demanding delinking, cuts across all ancient and modern forms of organization, socialist, communist and nationalist political parties (in the Third World), trade unions and mass organizations, various movements, etc. The 'compromise' is the very nature of things, as long as the points of rupture, whose circumstances only arise exceptionally, are not achieved. But in hollow times, and periods of reflux, such as ours, the progress of the anti-systemic forces implies that one swims strongly against the tide. Today, the refusal to yield to the constraints of international competitiveness dictating the policies of 'stabilization' and 'restructuring' to be found here and there, comes through the rejection of the Atlantic alliance and the common anti-Third-World front of the North, and urges 'non-alignment'.

The critiques of the viewpoint that we are expounding here, and of the underlying analyses, are manifold and might be the subject of a study in themselves. We shall be content to look at them globally from the angle of their political relevance. The critiques are clear examples of three political approaches summarized below.

First, there are the viewpoints developed by Western political currents, including the left, who refuse to see that the imperialist reality has pushed the whole of Western society, created on the basis of a broad consensus, over to the side of capitalism, and thereby postponed the advent of socialism. As a logical complement of this approach, these currents refuse to recognize the significance of transformations initiated from the periphery of the system, or rather they see 'capitalist expansion' there, but never the manifestation of its crisis. At the cultural level, they refuse to accept the idea of autonomy of the contribution of the (non-European) peoples of Asia and Africa in shaping the future. They reject the idea that the long march of socialism will eventually begin with these transformations at the periphery, and describe this view as 'Third-Worldism', which excuses them, they believe, from responding. In short, they reject the idea that the principal subject of transformation at its current stage of development is any other than the working class of the West, and deny the peoples of the Orient any place in the foreground. They insist on the idea that nationalism in the South can be recuperated by the bourgeoisie and draw the conclusion that our viewpoint is that of the bourgeoisies in the South. It is a critique in bad faith, since we, on the contrary, stress the desertion of nationalism – except as demagogic talk of no significance – by the bourgeoisies of the Third World. The opposing argument indicates, necessarily in our view, a dogmatic attachment to certain tenets of Western Marxism. The unfailing concern with relations of production and the labour process in advanced industry, legitimate in itself, is an excuse for wiping out of reality what is inconvenient, that is, what happens elsewhere and how that shapes the Western political reality by marginalizing the working class in the

society and integrating it in the general political consensus. Hence this attachment loses sight of the new routes the renaissance of the socialist perspective should take, even in the West. The – observed – academic slide of Marxism to Marxianism comes in the nature of things within the evolution of these currents. It is on the basis of academic positions of this kind that a fair part of the critiques against us are made, such as 'circulationism', etc.[22]

Second, there are the critiques by just those new Western currents who, like us, are reacting to the sclerosis of 'vulgar Marxism'. Their critiques are addressed more to the socialist, social-democratic and Western left, accused of envisaging a state plan little different from the capitalist reality, than to us. The analysts of these currents usually blame this sclerosis on Marxism itself. To the extent that we do not share this view, the critiques touch us as well. For our view is that Marx is no more responsible for the gulag forced labour camps than Montesquieu for Hitler's concentration camps (both the latter can swiftly be subsumed into the camp of 'bourgeois thought'!). Our critique is that the conceptual system of analysis put forward as a substitute for historical materialism – even overt – is confused, indecisive and lacking in rigour.[23]

Third, there are the critiques of Third World populists. They also often reject Marxism as a 'product of the West'. They see in world capitalist expansion less its economic driving force (capitalist) than the body of circumstances that have accompanied this expansion with a 'Europeanization of the world'. They conclude that this expansion is the translation of a greater cultural threat – the European menace – and relate it to the special characteristics of Western cultures. This position leads them to make the most of the special cultural characteristics of Asia and Africa (Islam, negritude, Hinduism, etc.), often in a nostalgic way, and sometimes despite the revolutionary social summons. These critiques of us have mainly appeared in Arab political literature and we have occasionally replied in the same tongue.[24]

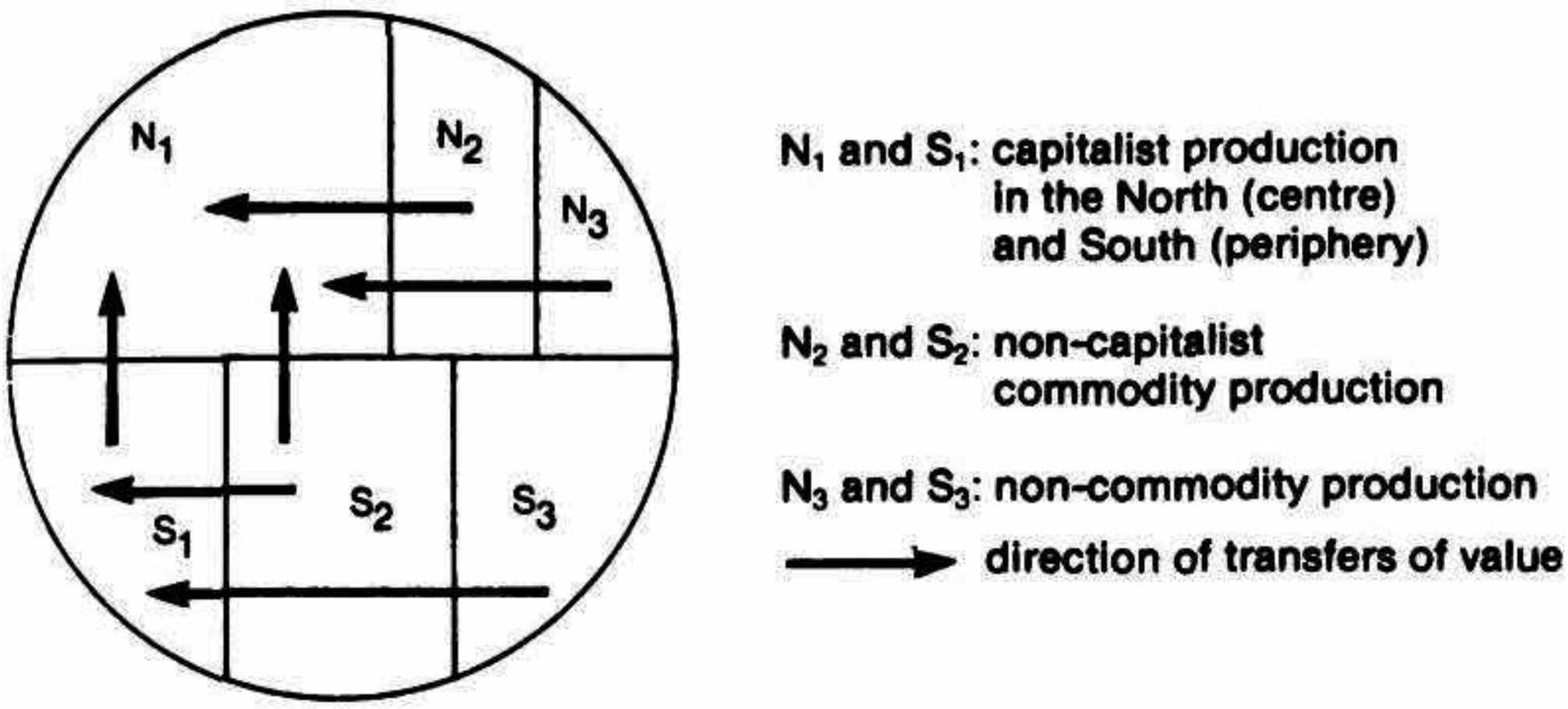
Unity and diversity in the world system. The law of value in worldwide capitalism[25]

The crisis has made more acute the constant debate over the character of the world capitalist system. One thesis formulated in this area – one we share with others – considers that the world capitalist system cannot be analysed as a juxtaposition of more or less advanced or backward interdependent national formations, but as constituting a unit whose developed centres and so-called underdeveloped peripheries are inseparable. In the logic of this thesis, the fundamental concepts of value and the value of labour power can be directly applied to the world field and not to the particular field of each national formation.

The thesis of worldwide value, a manifestation of the worldwide system of production, implies in effect that labour power has a single value throughout the world system. If this value must be related to the level of development of the forces of production, the level is that characteristic of the world system of

production as a whole, and not of the various national systems of production, which by the very fact of the worldwide expansion of the system gradually lose any meaning. But labour power has varying prices, especially from one country to another. These prices depend on political and social conditions peculiar to each national social formation. They may be so low that reproduction of the labour force is ensured in part by a transfer of value arising from non-capitalist commodity production and non-commodity production. The formal subjection of the non-capitalist modes of production of the periphery to the global exploitation of capital, permits rates of surplus value higher than in the properly capitalist production and, through the equalization of prices and profits, contributes to raising the average level of rates of surplus value on a world scale.

One can illustrate this mechanism by the schema below:



The relatively much more significant quantity of non-capitalist commodity labour (rural producers) and non-commodity labour (subsistence economy and domestic economy) in the periphery (the South) entails a transfer of value from the periphery where it is generated towards the dominant centre.

The thesis according to which the development of the forces of production and the value of labour power are in a dialectical and non-linear relationship is the heart of the critique of political economy, in the sense that Marx gives this expression: not the critique (in the current sense) of a 'bad' economic theory to replace it with a 'good' one, but the discovery that the economic laws that appear as binding as the laws of nature are only the product of commodity alienation operating in a social formation of classes. The recent (re)discovery that 'technology is not neutral', a decisive contribution from the Chinese cultural revolution, has permitted the refinding of this central thesis of Marx, abandoned by Marxism of the Second and Third International.

If, like bourgeois economic thinking and vulgar Marxism, one considers that the techniques of production are 'exogenous', one can then establish economic models of growth that 'demonstrate' that the value of labour power is determined by the level of development of the forces of production. The dynamic equilibrium (that is, from one period to another) of supply and demand, respectively of capital goods (Department I) and consumer goods

(Department II), demands in effect a growth in real wages, mathematically linked to that of productivity of labour in each Department and to modifications in the organic compositions conditioning this growth in productivities. In the context of our thesis of worldwide value, this equilibrium is meaningful only for the global scale of the system and not for the national sub-systems of which it is comprised.

This restrictive hypothesis of the 'neutrality of technology' is the necessary precondition for the elaboration of an 'economic theory'. But however elegant this 'theory', it is limited and essentially misleading and false, by the very fact of the hypothesis being so. Innovation bringing progress in productivity is at least as much capital's response to class struggle as the prime mover of the system. Moreover, it is sufficient to introduce into the schemas of reproduction a Department III, of absorption of surplus (luxury consumption by the bourgeoisie, unproductive consumption by the state . . .) to show that different levels of the value of labour power are compatible with a given level of development of the forces of production.

These observations should make the 'economists' more modest about the scientific value of their analyses. The economics is superficial and no substitute for analysis in terms of historical materialism. Unfortunately this critique is incomprehensible to bourgeois 'economists' and vulgar Marxists. In the spirit of mechanical materialism of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, they must establish economic laws as binding as the laws of nature. It is the precondition for them to be able to set up their economic models and speak of economic 'constraints' beyond social and political 'contingencies'. The bourgeois economists and vulgar Marxists, unable to grasp the meaning of Marx's critique – the inability to understand the significance of the theory of alienation and the fundamental distinction between natural sciences and social sciences is evidence of this – admit to a failure to understand the character of this dialectical relationship, which seems to them a 'tautology' or 'admission of failure', when it is really a demonstration of the unscientific character of 'economics'. This inability leads the critics to regard Marxism as a 'theory', when it is a method, that of historical materialism (and not 'natural' applied to history).

A method – and not a theory – does not imply logically necessary unilateral conclusions. The rejection of Marxism by the positivists, on the excuse that it would explain everything (thesis A and thesis non-A) and their argument that it would therefore not be a scientific theory, arises from this illusion of the possibility of a 'social science' analogous to the natural sciences.

The thesis of worldwide expansion is rejected by the prevailing currents of contemporary Western Marxism who accuse it of 'Third-Worldism', 'circulationism' and other anathema. The polemic is lively and in the view of some the analysis in terms of a 'world system' would deal with nations and ignore classes. That is going rather too fast. In truth, the question is whether classes can be understood only by their situation within each of the various national formations or whether such analysis is truncated and therefore inadequate.

Behind this 'academic' debate evidently there stand genuine political problems. The evolution of the USSR, and of China since the death of Mao, has been sufficiently disturbing as to lead some to conclude that these are not socialist revolutions, which had subsequently gone astray, but stages in the expansion of capitalism. The evolution of the Third World countries becoming independent has so emphasized the differences between them (OPEC, 'semi-industrialized' countries, 'fourth world') as to make the very concept of periphery lose meaning for some.

The debate is not only within the Marxist camp. In the current phase of crisis it also takes place outside among those who, for lack of a better expression, can be subsumed under the general name of 'populism'. Populisms of the social movements of the developed world (the Greens in the broad sense of the word going beyond ecology); populisms of revolt in the East (Poland) and in the South (renewal of Islamic fundamentalism for example).

Notes

1. See *Class and Nation*, in which we give our point of view on the Marxist–Leninist–Stalinist theory of the nation, and link this critique to an explanation of our theory of the tributary mode of production and its forms, feudal and/or complete. We deal there with the question of the pre-capitalist oriental nations, an issue we return to below. See also on this subject, Amin, Samir, *The Arab Nation*, London, Zed Press, 1978.

2. Mukherjee, Ramkrishna, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974.

3. This issue of Egyptian mercantilism in the 18th and 19th centuries is dealt with in my article (in Arabic) 'The origins of Egyptian cultural duality'. See, too, *The Arab Nation*. The literature of the *Nahda* to which we refer here is commented on in (in Arabic) *The Crisis of the Arab Society*.

4. The description of Barnum and Bailey politics is taken from Giovanni Arrighi. It suggests that as there is no real substance in the competition between the two parties on which the electors must express themselves, the show organizers emphasize the secondary aspects, puffed up with the exaggeration typical of fair and circus barkers.

5. An explanation of our analysis of the social character and the difference between the Soviet Union and China can be found in *The Future of Maoism*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1983, in which several theses on the historical limits of Leninism and Maoism are put forward, noting what is common and what is distinct in the two successive advances. Our critique of Charles Bettelheim's argument (in *Class Struggles in the USSR*, New York, Monthly Review Press, and Hassocks, Harvester, Vol. 1, 1976, 1977, Vol. 2, 1978) is developed in Chapter 3 below.

6. For the content of delinking, see Part One of *The Future of Maoism*. For the concept of delinking, see section II of this chapter.

7. An oral comment by Silva Michelena in a symposium at the Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris, June 1984.

8. A viewpoint expounded systematically in the written submission of Giovanni Arrighi and his Binghamton colleagues to the Naples symposium on the future of the Mediterranean, October 1983.

9. Bill Warren's work (*Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*, edited by John Sender, London, NLB and Verso, 1980) is subjected to a critique in Chapter 3 below.

10. The literature on the rentier state, among the considerations relative to the Gulf oil states, has led several Arab authors (notably the Tunisian Khaled El-Manoubi) to a preliminary attempt at systemization of the concepts of the 'rentier, semi-rentier, infra-rentier State', etc.

11. *The Future of Maoism.*

12. The close link between the capitalist character of worldwide expansion and the expansion of 'European' domination, including its particular cultural characteristics, in 'The Asiatic and African vocation of Marxism', is stressed in chapter 4 below. This link is never mentioned in the 'abstract' analyses of capitalism prevalent in the West, even among Marxists.

13. Holland, Stuart, (ed.) *Out of Crisis: A Project for European Recovery*, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1983; the Reports of the Brandt Commission, *North–South: A Programme for Survival*, London, Pan, 1980, *Common Crisis North–South: Cooperation for World Recovery*, London, Pan, 1983.

14. Amoa, Kwame, Lomé III, Critique of a Prologue (mimeo, Dakar, 1984) minutely analyses the policies and proposals of Europe for its ACP associates.

15. Beaud, Michel, *Le mirage de la croissance*, Paris, Syros, 1983.

16. Mandrin, Jacques, *Le socialisme et la France*, Paris, Sycomore, 1981; Lipietz, Alain, *L'audace ou l'enlisement*, Paris, La Découverte, 1984.

17. Giovanni Arrighi's position in *Dynamics of Global Crisis.*

18. Johan Galtung's position in various articles.

19. Immanuel Wallerstein's position in *Dynamics of Global Crisis.*

20. See 'The End of a Debate', Part IV in *Imperialism and Unequal Development.*

21. See *The Future of Maoism.*

22. A complete bibliography of these critiques would take many pages. Our work has largely developed as a counter to these positions. For an overall reply to the critiques, see chapters 3 and 4 below.

23. Johan Galtung along with Rudolf Bahro and others has best summarized these points of view. See our comments, on the Green movements, chapter 5 below.

24. We are not insensitive to this argument (see our section on the 'white peril' in chapter 4 below). How could an Arab be? It seems that for Europeans, almost thoughtlessly, Palestine is the land of Israel partly because it was so 2,000 years ago, but rather more because the Israelis are Europeans like them and their rights are therefore privileged. Thus the rights of the people who occupied it for 2,000 years count for nothing as did those of the Redskins. If the Jewish diaspora had occurred in the direction of India and China, the Zionist plan for a 'return to Palestine' would have seemed a total absurdity to the Europeans. Would anyone imagine the preposterous proposal of remaking the map of Europe as it was 2,000 years ago or of returning Spain to the Muslims? Moreover, the argument reveals Europe's latent 'anti-semitism': Judaism is not regarded as a religion, the Jews constitute a foreign 'nation', formed of the real or imaginary descendants of ancestors coming from Palestine. Would anyone imagine considering Christians as 'Romans', or the 'nation of Christ' – and Palestinian as well?

A frank expression of these anomalies, rationally inexplicable but perfectly explicable when one considers the 'white peril' ingredient of the history of capitalist expansion, is provided by Professor Mandouze (*Le Monde*, July 1984).

25. A detailed exposition of these theses in Part IV of *Imperialism and Unequal Development*, and *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism.*

3. Expansion or Crisis of Capitalism?

Introduction

Our era of crisis certainly makes self-criticism necessary for what might be called the left on a world scale: the labour and socialist movements of the West (socialist and communist parties, interclass social movements of reform or confrontation: ecologists, feminists, anti-racists, etc.), the forces and partisans of socialism in the countries of the East, the radical popular national liberation movements of the Third World.

The sum total of this century and a half of struggles for socialism merits such self-criticism. In the 19th century, the labour movement, then restricted to capitalist Europe, produced a vision of the socialist future and the organizational forms that appeared appropriate. The 1914–18 War tolled the knell of the reformist strategies produced by this movement, just as the failure of the revolutions in central Europe in the wake of the First World War refuted the revolutionary alternative. Since then there has been growing polarization in the West between reformism, in more and more overt retreat from the prospect of the socialist plan, and the parties of the Third International, reduced to impotence. But the success of the Russian revolution appeared to open up a new prospect: that of transition to socialism from the 'weakest links' of the system, that is from its backward peripheries. Leninism provided a theory of this prospect in its theses on imperialism and, within the Marxist tradition, offered new strategies and organizational forms. The latter seemed all the more effective as the second great revolution, in China, boasted them. The very limitations of 'existing socialism' in the USSR, which came to light after Stalin's death, were not too embarrassing since Maoism put 'Soviet revisionism' on trial and proposed to strengthen the Leninist line on the construction of socialism. The concomitant emergence of the national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa and even Latin America seemed to support the Leninist view of transition on a world scale; this transition must be pursued with radicalization of the struggles breaking new weak links off from the capitalist system; Vietnam and Cuba revealed this possibility.

The partisans of socialism in the West, where there was certainly nothing new of note, enthusiastically joined the ranks of Maoism and support for the 'storm zones'. Once the Gang of Four had been defeated in China, and Mao

was dead, when the violent liberation struggles seemed to be over with the acquisition of independence and the new powers *in situ* in the Third World showed their capitalist face, the two issues Leninism thought it had resolved were raised again: 1) Was not the Chinese, like the Russian, revolution going to lead inevitably to a society that could not be called 'socialist' or even a society in 'transition' towards socialism? 2) Was national liberation in the Third World a stage, not of the world socialist revolution, but of the bourgeois revolution, offering broader scope for capitalist expansion?

An answer to these closely linked questions breaking with the Leninist view of the world transition to socialism became more and more apparent. In this regard, two fundamentally complementary[1] points of view have been strongly argued recently, one regarding the 'character' of Soviet (and, possibly, Chinese) society, the other regarding the prospects for the capitalist development under way in the Third World. The body of theses making up this response may be summed up as follows:

a) The so-called attempts at the construction of socialism in the USSR and in China, are failures from the point of view of the prospects of abolition of class. In fact such attempts are no more than stages in an immense capitalist accumulation, founded on the exploitation of labour (peasants and workers). In these circumstances it is high time to review the description given to revolutions at the origin of these constructions. Are they not merely bourgeois revolutions? Doubtless the forms of this accumulation and the characteristics of the accompanying public society have their special quality. But that is nothing new: there is no 'general model' of capitalist development, on the basis of which the 'distortions' of particular models may be judged; there are only specific paths of this development, resulting from particular social conjunctures.

In this sense, the Chinese path (for development of capitalism) might well differ from the Soviet path, as there are differences between the American, British, French, German paths, etc, (and these too cannot be reduced to a single model). But in the spirit of this thesis, it was to be expected that the Chinese path from its outset in 1950 would be fundamentally similar to the Soviet path.

b) What for want of a better expression is called the Third World has no real existence as such; it comprises a motley conglomeration of capitalist formations that are also the locus of capitalist accumulation. The latter is unequal of course and presents particular features peculiar to each concrete situation as a function of local class relations, but there is no lowest common denominator to allow a distinction of capitalist accumulation at the centre (or the centres) from capitalist accumulation at the periphery (or peripheries). Development of capitalism in the Third World is not essentially better or worse than it is elsewhere; it has, too, an eminently progressive historical aspect: that of developing the forces of production.

The two theses do not deal with separate spheres, but are two facets of one and the same analysis of what may be regarded as the sole fundamental reality: development of capitalism on a world scale, its expansion from the West to the East and the South.

Whether these theses are true or false, adequate or inadequate, has wider political implications. If the theses are correct, the conclusion to be drawn is that: either socialism (abolition of class) is not on the agenda of history, as the preliminary capitalist accumulation is far from being achieved; or, if passive surrender to the demands of accumulation is rejected, that the struggle for socialism must be founded on other strategies and tactics than those implemented since 1917. The old arguments are opened afresh: reform or revolution? Socialism in one country or world socialism? If, in fact, the forces of capitalist development still have an objective basis and a historic task to fulfil, if thereby the 'socialist revolution' is not on the agenda, reformism may be the only realistic option in keeping with popular interests. The alternative is the more voluntarist option of 'world revolution'.

We, ourselves, are far from being convinced by these two theses and offer a critique in what follows.

The fundamental political question at the heart of the debate is: for socialism to be possible before capitalism has achieved its historic task of developing the forces of production and proletarianizing the society, it must be shown that it is possible to develop the forces of production and at the same time strengthen the trends towards socialism in the society.

By trends towards socialism we mean here a social evolution with the following characteristics: reduction of social inequalities, especially between the town and the countryside, manual labour and intellectual labour, etc.; strengthening of workers' control of the forces of production; and strengthening of genuine political and social democracy in the society.

Our point of view, as might be guessed, is that this is possible. But the conditions must be specified. In the latter regard a related question arises whether this socialist construction necessarily entails a 'delinking' from the world capitalist system (and the meaning of the term must be defined). Here again, our point of view, as might be guessed, is that such delinking is inevitable. The corollary of our question is the following: can capitalist development bring the currently 'underdeveloped' countries to a level such that their societies become 'analogous' to those of the developed West (analogous is clearly relative: analogous as French society is to German society, or American to Japanese . . .)? Our reply, as might be guessed, is in the negative. It is the very reason why the 'non-capitalist' (socialist or 'revisionist') path becomes an unavoidable historical necessity.

The thesis that neither the USSR nor China is socialist, or on the way to becoming so, and that they cannot expect to evolve in this direction is complemented by the thesis that national liberation in the Third World too can only open the path to an intensification of its capitalist development.

What has so far been called 'socialism' is nothing of the kind. It has been a resounding failure since 1917. Leninism and Maoism are not what they purport to be; they are only particular forms of the ideology of capitalist accumulation, and the Marxist methodological critique of ideology must be applied to them:

not taking things for what they purport to be, but for what they are.

However, capitalist expansion goes on, not only in the particular Soviet and Chinese forms, but elsewhere too in the Third World, in the framework of the growing internationalization of the domination of capital. This expansion gradually obliterates the dichotomy of developed centres/underdeveloped peripheries. The prospect of homogenization of the world by the spread of capitalist relations on the basis of high levels of development of the forces of production is still remote. Meanwhile of course other revolutions of the USSR–China kind are perhaps possible, but they will produce no different results.

This dual thesis is, as can be seen, pessimistic in the sense that it postpones the prospect of socialism to the Greek kalends. This characterization does not of itself make for strength or weakness. It may be deemed compatible with Marxism, or at least with a certain non-Leninist and non-Maoist interpretation of it.

Socialism is not possible until capitalism has achieved its historic task. The working class alone can bring the socialist future. It is therefore necessary to wait for society to be proletarianized on a world scale for this future to become possible. Unless of course the proletariats of the West do not wait for this spread of the fundamental relation of capitalist exploitation on a world scale and undertake the socialist transformation of their developed society before that.

This is the view[2] of what Perry Anderson calls 'Western Marxism', which he himself defines as a pessimistic view arising from the failure of socialist attempts. This failure – as the Marxism in question has no influence on the developed working class, the sole bearer of the socialist future – condemns this 'Western Marxism' to being, in Perry Anderson's own words, a 'theory without practice'.

Meanwhile history must go on. And the peoples react to the fate that capitalist development has in store for them. They can only wait until capitalism has achieved its 'historic mission' to hope to 'change the system'. And if that is indeed Marxism, on the one hand a theory without practice (in the West) and on the other an unconfessed practice of capitalist development (in the USSR and China), then to hell with Marxism!

Is it useful to go on trying to save what it can only be: a theoretical, albeit cumbersome, corpse?

Some will suggest abandoning Marxism and not merely its Leninist and Maoist 'distortion'. In the West this would include not only the 'new philosophers' and others who sing the praises of 'bourgeois democracy'. It would also include serious reformists who see nothing better than the genuine action of gradual transformation of the society, with respect for democratic will. It would also be the preference of a great number of new social movements, whose genuine significance in social transformation should not be underestimated: the Greens in Northern Europe (ecologists, pacifists, etc.), the movement of the young who want to 'change life', the feminist movements, etc.

In the East, where Marxism has been accompanied by abominable practices,

there are still more reasons to part company with it. It is not by chance that the revolt of the Polish people was organized under the banner of Church and nation.

And in the South, where Marxism has merged into national liberation, the same is true. It is also not by chance that the revolt of the Iranian people was organized under the banner of the mullahs.

The argument does not convince us. Not that the popular movements in question should be despised, or worse still regarded as 'reactionaries'. On the contrary they are all to varying degrees positive forces for change. And it is highly arrogant to imagine that nothing can be learned from them, including their critiques of Marxism, or its practices. Or to think there is no need to take account of the new problems they pose, and that an ossified form of Marxism has in fact neglected. Plus the fact that in our interpretation of Marxism these problems have their place. We are thinking of the feminist movement for example.

But these current popular struggles do not yet seem to us to have opened the way to any decisive enrichment, at the level of analysis of social reality or of the strategy to change it. Neither Polish Catholic nationalism, nor Islam (Shiite or not), nor ecology, nor anti-capitalist culturalism, nor reformism seem to us to afford a grid of new ideas.

This judgement is not an appeal for a return to some kind of 'Marxist fundamentalism'. Such a fundamentalism does indeed exist, not only under the dogmatic and ossified form of Moscow's 'officials', but also (and even principally) in 'Western Marxism' to which we referred above.

It is true that no interpretation of Marxism, whether Leninism or Maoism, is sacred. But we know of no effective system of thought and action other than historical materialism, on the clear understanding that it is seen as a method and not a doctrine. An open method, capable of assimilating new ingredients. Subject to this condition, Marxism can, we believe, go on being not only the best means of understanding the world, but also the best instrument for a clear-sighted undertaking of change.

The battle against a fundamentalist interpretation of Marxism is essential. In two complementary books, one on the history of capitalism and another on that of socialism, Michel Beaud recounts this eventful history.[3] We recommend them to the reader. Beaud strikes the nail on the head: how in true history there is no distinction between 'the forces of socialism' (the 'goodies', especially the Marxists) and the forces of capitalism (the 'baddies', including non-Marxist currents of socialism); how rather the trend towards socialism and the trend towards absorption of the contradiction by the modified expansion of capitalism are both to be found in popular theories and movements, utopian socialisms, Marxisms (in the plural) and reformisms.

We shall deal with the questions raised by remaining faithful to this option of 'non-fundamentalism'. The questions are: Why has no socialist transformation of the developed West occurred and appears not to be on the agenda despite the antiquity of the ideology of socialism and the labour field? Why is the USSR

how it is despite the socialist aims of Bolshevism, and where is China going after the failure of the Cultural Revolution? And, why has the revolt of the oppressed peoples of the Third World yielded such slight and disappointing results so far?

These are related questions that flow from the fundamental questions posed above: is socialism possible from the starting point of a legacy of 'underdevelopment'? Can capitalism solve the problems of 'underdevelopment'?

Before providing the ingredients for affirmative replies to these questions, let us say at once that this cannot be done in abstract theoretical terms. For in this situation the replies to be made – whatever they are – are dogmatic and apparently 'infallible'. Some will say for example that reconciliation between the objective demand of development of the forces of production and the objective of genuine progress towards a classless society is not possible, *for the reason that* socialism is not possible until capitalism has achieved its historic role, that of developing the forces of production and spreading the fundamental relation of capitalist exploitation (a wage-earning proletariat selling its labour power to capital). The tautology we bring out by emphasising 'for the reason that' is obvious. It is not only the implicit position of Charles Bettelheim with regard to the USSR and China; it is also the position of Bill Warren and his disciples with regard to the Third World. In this view, socialism can only possibly be on the agenda in the developed West and in Eastern Europe (the USSR and its European satellites), where the wage relationship is henceforth predominant, but not in China, a still largely peasant society, nor in the rest of the Third World. A position that is, for example, taken by Tom Kemp and which has the merit of being clear (as is often the case with the Trotskyist current to which he belongs): the future of socialism depends exclusively on the developed working classes (of the West and the USSR).[4] But is not a declaration of principle of this kind gratuitous, since it is precisely the developed working classes in question who do not seek the objective of a classless society? The conventional explanation (Tom Kemp's in fact) that it is due to 'betrayal' by the leadership is too simple. If the people can be indefinitely deceived (for a century and a half in this instance), what is the sense in class struggle?

This evident reality has to be explained. And its nuances shown first. There have been and are socialist forces within the developed working classes: those who have produced an adherence to utopian socialism, to British Chartism, to the Paris Commune, to the Third International, etc. Why have these forces been unable to triumph? Marx suggested a link between the failure of the British working class and its chauvinistic stand on the Irish question. Was he wrong? Lenin linked 'Capitulatory' reformism in the West to imperialist exploitation. Was he wrong? Far from being wrong, in our opinion, neither Marx nor Lenin dared to go far enough in this direction: the unequal development of capitalism as a world system is the principal cause of this retreat from the prospect of socialism in the developed centres, not only for the fact that it corrupts the labour aristocracies (an expression adopted by Lenin), but for the fact that the unequal international division of labour, through

which this expansion is expressed for what it is, gives rise to new anti-socialist strata and classes (the new middle classes, etc.) other than the proletariat. Some would like to prevent consideration of these realities, by denying for example that the national reality is a social fact and reiterating dogmatically that 'only the working classes exist'!

And has socialism ever existed in Eastern Europe? The success of Bolshevism in the Russian working class, of the communist parties in Yugoslavia and Albania during and after the Second World War cannot be devoid of all socialist content. Even today, in such countries as Poland, Hungary or East Germany, where 'socialism' has been imposed by the Soviet army, socialist aspirations exist. What could be more natural in the circumstances than that they should be inextricably bound up with reformist, or bourgeois, aspirations and nationalist sentiments – positive as it happens (the desire to be rid of Soviet domination which among other things runs directly counter to the progress of socialism)? But to say that the self-management tendency in Yugoslavia, the desire for autarkic independence in Albania, the aspiration to workers' and popular democracy in Poland etc., have no socialist dimension is to fall inevitably into the abstract and vacuous opposition of a 'pure' socialist aspiration set against capitalist ideology. It goes without saying that in Albania, for example, integration in the world system would have been more conducive to the development of a local bourgeoisie than the options of the regime since 1945 – and that is why the bourgeoisies of the Third World do not challenge this integration.

We have to go further. The retreat from the prospect of socialism in the developed West has not prevented its progress in the Third World. The success of the revolution in China and in Vietnam is not that of a nationalist peasant revolution, from which the socialist dimension might be abstracted. The question remains – and we shall return to it: has not the unequal expansion of capitalism created the possibility (but with no certainty of course) of a socialist development from the weakest links of the global system? Under what circumstances?

One more step in the abstract and negative response to the question posed – is socialism possible before capitalism has achieved its historic task (in two centuries)? – is taken by the assertion that 'development of the forces of production necessarily subjects the society to the law of value'. This argument is too frequently invoked in the way that supernatural forces are invoked.

Undoubtedly this is thought to provide an excuse for not explaining the meaning. So there is no clear indication of the modalities by which the 'value' operates. In this style, it has often been written that the USSR (or China) was subject to the law of value that governs the capitalist system, without revealing the mysterious mechanisms by which the 'value' (which? that governing reproduction of the system in the United States, or in the world capitalist system?) would really determine the price of labour power in the USSR and in China, the revenue of the collective farmer or peasant, member of a Chinese commune, the prices of wheat and steel, of bread and the tractor. Usually, however, vagueness of expression allows value to be treated at times as a world

category and at others as a national category. This occurs, especially with those who want on the one hand to explain that the Soviet economy, or China's, is determined by the laws governing the capitalist system (here it is necessarily a world category), and on the other to maintain that the distinctions between the developed capitalist countries and the underdeveloped countries do not arise from general considerations (value as a world category), but from local circumstances. Curiously, then, less autonomy in regard to the world system is attributed to the Soviet or Chinese ruling classes than to the bourgeoisies of the Third World!

At this level of abstraction anything can be sustained: the thesis of the impossibility of socialism, or its converse! To answer the question raised it only remains to examine in concrete terms how the Soviet and Chinese societies have really developed the forces of production, dealt with relations of production and class and are situated in their relations to the world capitalist system. In the same way, how the popular and socialist forces are situated in the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples must be examined in concrete terms.

Is the USSR capitalist?

In the third volume of *La Lutte des classes en URSS 1939–1941*, Charles Bettelheim expounds the thesis that not only has the Soviet society become 'capitalist', but also that the character of the 1917 revolution should be reconsidered in the light of the social evolution that it had initiated, and henceforth be described as a capitalist revolution.

The development of capitalism it initiated is supposed to have occurred in two periods: first, in the 1920s, the accumulation of industrial capital was articulated on a petty commodity peasant economy, itself the result of the peasant dimension of the 'capitalist revolution' of 1917; then from 1930 it was articulated on a rural economy ostensibly collective but in fact dominated by the capitalist state. The collectivization of the 1930s is therefore regarded as the second act of the capitalist revolution. Bettelheim also tells us that he reached this conclusion after the appearance of similar evolutions in China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. That is to say that in his view the Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. revolutions are also for the same essential reasons capitalist revolutions, even if, as is agreed, each presents its own special characteristics.

In the conclusion to the book Bettelheim reminds us that there is no 'ideal' model of capitalist development, but only paths, each with its own character, whether it be the French, American, Russian or Chinese, or Indian path.

We certainly subscribe to the latter proposition but not to the preceding ones. It is correct – and useful to remember – that there is no 'ideal' model of capitalism, but only the constants characterizing the various actual historical forms. In analysing some of these historical forms and describing their characteristics as 'distortions' (in relation to the developed Western 'model') there is a risk of harbouring an ambiguity. We ourselves have constantly used the expression 'distortions', which is for the reason indicated undoubtedly

misleading. But it is only a question of semantics so long as the special characteristics in question are identified and it is established how, beyond these special characteristics, there are within the various forms being compared the same basic constants defining the capitalist mode of production.

Are the basic constants defining capitalism to be found in the Soviet form? This does not seem to be the case to us. For us in fact, the wage relationship is not the only constant necessary to define capitalism. The parcelling of control of capital is also an essential ingredient in the mode of production. This parcelling is the basis on which the price-value dialectic peculiar to capitalism develops. The debate on the 'transformation of values into prices' has permitted an advance on this ground. The necessary difference between the rate of profit – the appearance – and – the essence – the rate of surplus value governing it (the rate of profit expressed in prices being necessarily different from what it is when expressed in values) presents a problem only for those who do not see that it is an essential ingredient in the capitalist mode. We refer the reader to our own expositions on the issue. Our conclusion is that the critique of political economy, in the sense that Marx gives it, and the theory of commodity alienation associated with it have no meaning without this parcelling. Moreover, this 'constant' governs the base-superstructure relationship specific to capitalism: the separation of politics and economics, the emergence of an autonomous civil society, the economistic content of the system's ideology and consequently the concept of political democracy, etc. (cf. our expositions on these themes). Conversely, the special characteristics of the Soviet model, based on non-parcelling out, which apparently relate it to the tribute-paying mode, are not secondary. They cannot for example be attributed to the backwardness of the society ('Asiatic despotism'). On the contrary they are essential and new. They encourage us to think of the Soviet society in innovative terms of a new class mode of production. To reduce this reality to a form of capitalism is in our view to impoverish its analysis.

The effort devoted by Charles Bettelheim to reducing the Soviet reality to a capitalist form seems in the end artificial to us. In the final chapter of his book, Bettelheim seeks to deny that state centralization of ownership of capital operates different from the parcelling of control in the Western form of capitalism. For this purpose, he establishes a parallel between the 'crises' of the Soviet system in the 1930s and those of capitalism. In fact, in our opinion, the disorder and waste of the Soviet mode, the counter-productive character of unlimited super-exploitation, have very little to do with the mechanism of the capitalist crisis. As we shall be obliged later to consider the question of the capitalist crisis, we shall then show the fundamental difference between that and the 'crises' in Soviet accumulation. The analogy suggested by Bettelheim is in our view misleading.

Whether it is a matter of a new mode, the question arises whether it is stable or not. And our reply here is that it does not appear to be so. The special characteristic of the – virtually permanent – Soviet crisis is that the system does

not seem able to go beyond the stage of extensive accumulation to embark upon intensive accumulation. This is a strange form of capitalism. Is not this incapacity the proof that it is not capitalism but a historical cul de sac, the consequence of a socialist revolution gone astray.

We are therefore brought back to Lenin, of whom Bettelheim wished to be rid. The 1917 revolution inextricably merges ingredients of the socialist revolution (what the worker soviets were at the outset . . .) and the bourgeois revolution (the peasant revolution, claims to democracy, etc.) by the simple fact that Russia had not experienced a bourgeois revolution. This factor, combined with its logical correlative that the objective task of developing the forces of production remained largely to be achieved, explains why 1917 was not an end, but the struggle between the socialist line and the line described as 'bourgeois' (the term is misleading in our opinion and that of 'revisionist' corresponding to the rising new class forces more appropriate) was to continue after 1917. The collectivization of 1930 was not part of an implacable logical sequence flowing from 1917 although evidently, as always, there were ancient roots in what happened (in this instance, the workerism inherited from the Second International, etc.). It merely indicates the victory of the revisionist line over the socialist line. And it is this difference that separates the Chinese form (to date) from the USSR's, a difference that Bettelheim and his disciples seek to obliterate.

Finally, Bettelheim implicitly propounds the thesis that the demand of accumulation acts as an absolute constraint making the capitalist stage inevitable. Is this not an economistic reduction of historical materialism, a return to a (Rostow style) view of progress by necessary stages which denies the historical reality of unequal development, namely that a more advanced system can be born from contradictions in less advanced parts of the system? This economistic reduction obliges Bettelheim to obliterate the political and ideological dimension of history: Leninism, according to him, is nothing more than an unwittingly capitalist ideology.

This view of the economics/politics relationship, far from being enriching is on the contrary highly impoverishing. The analysis, such as Michel Beaud's, in terms of contradictions within the labour and socialist movement between the tendencies to socialist aspiration and the forces of reproduction of the class society, seems much more persuasive to us.

Is China similar to the USSR?

The opinion that China in no way differs from the USSR, in the trend of its probable evolution or in its past (the 30 years from 1950–80) is common. We intended, in *The Future of Maoism*, to dispute the validity of this thesis that seems to us highly simplistic.

Our point of departure is evidently that socialist construction in our era is not an impossible utopia. Furthermore, the actual forms of worldwide expansion of capitalism have put this construction on the agenda of what is

essential. In other words, in the tradition of Leninism, we start from the hypothesis of a world transition to socialism beginning from ruptures in the weakest links of the system. The transition thereby remains ambivalent and incomplete, as long as the need for development of the forces of production remains real.

The real question that cannot be evaded on history's agenda is the following: how can the forces of production in the backward continents of the world system be developed while at the same time the tendencies to a socialist evolution of the society are strengthened?

In the preceding section, we rejected a response to the question in abstract terms (on the lines: it is impossible since 'value' – without specifying its modalities of action – imposes capitalism, etc.).

We must therefore see in concrete terms how Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism have responded to the challenge of history. In other words, is Maoism a repetition of Leninism and Stalinism, or on the contrary is it a deepening and an advance in its line of development? To answer this question we must examine the theory and practice of the Maoist strategy of development of the forces of production, the theory and practice of Maoist politics.

In *The Future of Maoism* we chose to begin with the economic basis of the system. This choice made it necessary to explain the modalities of operation of the 'law of value' in various hypotheses of development of the forces of production and organization of the relations of production and exchange. It was the precondition to escape from the ambivalent discourse abstractly contrasting the (undefined) 'law of value' with its negation, and allowing whatever conclusion that could be desired, according to whim.

We showed three possible modalities of action of the law of value in a society where the question of the necessary development of the forces of production is really posed; the function of value: 1) as a category of the world capitalist system, that in the final analysis governs the prices of goods and the value of labour power in the system as a whole, with the price of labour power remaining unequal from one capitalist formation to another; 2) in a national system delinked from the system of world capitalist values, and based on the option of industrial accumulation financed by exaction from the peasantry without compensation; and 3) in a national system, likewise delinked, but based on the option of equal exchange between town and countryside.

Each of these modalities entails a different kind of development of the forces of production.

It was interesting to see, after the characteristics of each of these theoretical models had been shown, that the essential traits of current development in the capitalist Third World, the USSR and China effectively correspond to these three models. The method offers didactic advantages that seem persuasive to us, and enables us to see more clearly through the difficult debates on Maoism (advance on or repetition of Leninism?), 'value' (for and against, regarded as necessary for or incompatible with socialism), and, it seems to us, understanding the historical limits of the leftist line within Maoism that explains the line's defeat. There is a striking parallel between the conclusions to

which this analysis leads us and those to which political analysis has led Alain Jacob.[5] These conclusions certainly bar assimilating the current Chinese reality to that of the Soviet Union.

Economic analysis in these terms helps show clearly what has been achieved, but is no guide to the future. The latter always depends finally on class struggle and the political options determined by its outcome. We were naturally drawn on from the history of the development of the forces of production to the political debate. At this level Maoism seemed to us to suffer from the same historical limitations inherited from the labour movement, Bolshevism and the Third International, especially in regard to its concepts of party and democracy.

Critics of contemporary China often refrain from explaining the meaning of the 'law of value' they invoke, and thus move from an empty abstraction to an empirical concept whose meaning remains ambiguous. So they go from one extreme to another, from one day to the next: the same realities, the same statistics on the basic of which it was concluded in 1976 that China was egalitarian in the extreme, had almost achieved communism, became two years later evident proof that it was the most inegalitarian society in the world, a grotesque image almost identical to that of Bangladesh! (We are not exaggerating the degree of about-turn!) An about-face of this kind tells us not about China and Maoism, but about the character of a particular Western current of so-called 'Maoism'. This current on the crest of the struggles of the 1960s believed that everything was possible ('everything, at once'), without transition . . . or preparation . . . ; was then 'disappointed' more by its own failure than by the outcome of the struggles in China (since these 'Maoists' had never paid any attention to Mao's opinion that for decades to come several more 'Cultural Revolutions' would be needed to overcome); and then concluded that socialism was impossible . . .

Our approach implies on the contrary a serious examination of the rate of development in China. Turning up one's nose at this is, we think, an admission of total lack of reality; how could an Indian or Chinese worker, like a thoughtless intellectual, spurn the question of development? The 'everything, at once' school, the immediate abolition of value, etc., are nothing but dangerous utopias.

The slide towards a 'critique of the political economy of socialism' follows naturally from this total lack of reality. An abstract discourse that becomes: value is the proof of social alienation, and the political economy of capitalism is only a manifestation of it; therefore communism is the abolition of value; when a political economy of socialism is spoken of, it is proof that class, exploitation and alienation have not been abolished; the political economy of Maoist China is exactly the same as that of Stalin's Russia, proof of the capitalist character of the society. The special characteristics of China's political economy (equal relationship between town and countryside for example) that distinguish it from that of Stalin's Russia (exaction from the peasantry) are obliterated. The

question is not even raised: China and the USSR are jumbled in this abstraction: 'socialist capital'. 'True capitalism' will be achieved on the day when the state, abolishing the parcelling of capital, replaces private capitalists. Is there not something disquieting about the way such abolition, unifying the economics and politics that capitalism had separated, changes the character of the system?

Rosa Luxemburg had already made a very similar critique of political economy. But Rosa Luxemburg was writing at a time when socialist revolution seemed to be on the agenda in Germany; she wanted to warn against a social-democratic interpretation ('socialism is capitalism without capitalists') prevailing since the congresses of Erfurt and Gotha, and was therefore recalling the critique Marx had already made of this positivist reduction of communism.

The temptation of imagining a capitalism that by stages of growing centralization of capital arrived at 'statism' is also old hat: Nikolai Bukharin had thought of it and George Orwell was to take up the theme again in his famous book *1984*. This tendency is certainly current to the degree that the working class interprets socialism as merely the replacement of private ownership by public ownership. Bordiga was the first to see in Soviet society capitalism 'achieved' with this perfect centralization. But Bordiga was seeking to describe the Soviet anomaly, which he refused to call socialist, without falling into what he believed would be the hocus-pocus of the Trotskyist proposition that it was a case of 'degenerated workers' power'. The invention of 'socialist capital' was his solution.

His excuse was that he was writing well before Maoism had envisaged a strategy of development of the forces of production founded on different social relations from those inspired by the Soviet experience, a strategy based on alternative social modalities of realizing value, a strategy that proclaimed its rupture with what it described as 'revisionism'.

Was the invention of 'socialist capital' an acceptable response to the problem posed? It does not seem to us to be the case since the absolute centralization of capital puts an end to capitalism, even if it does not mean putting socialism in its place. To resort nowadays to the theory of 'socialist capital', without taking account of the Maoist experience or what is now known of the apparently insoluble obstacles the USSR has encountered to intensive accumulation, does not strike us as very convincing.[6]

By force of abstraction all the cats are grey: to say that the USSR, Yugoslavia, Albania, China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. are all the same is not to say anything very meaningful. It is as much as to say that India and the United States are both the same . . . How can a line of action be defined on the basis of such abstractions?

Capitalist expansion in the Third World: return to bourgeois ideology

When the very possibility of socialism before capitalism has fulfilled its historic task of developing the forces of production has been rejected, everything that

happens in the Third World must be reduced to being exclusively the expression of capitalist expansion, without bothering to acknowledge its possible special characteristics and particular contradictions. This proposition is valid only at such an elevated level of abstraction as to lose any political relevance.

The bourgeois view of 'development' may be content with this kind of abstraction since it does not intend to change the world, but to enjoy it. In fact, capitalism does go a long way in developing the forces of production, but in its own fashion, and to speak of 'stagnant' and 'blocked' capitalism does not make much sense. But who has actually said that?

The bourgeois apologists of capitalist expansion are content with saying that: the 'underdeveloped' world is the locus of capitalist expansion, as witness the rates of economic growth and industrialization; this expansion is no different from that experienced and known by the developed countries; integration in the international division of labour is a factor in accelerating development by making capital and efficient technology available to the Third World; this expansion founded on both the domestic market and integration in the world market is synonymous with cultural progress, higher standards of living, etc.

This bourgeois vision reduces social reality to a single, quantitative, global and simple economic criterion: the special characteristics of the position of the local classes and their integration in the global system are clean forgotten; one 'industry' is always as good as another as it brings in a profit, one exchange is always as good as another as both sides of the exchange seem to derive a profit . . . The pretensions of bourgeois thought to universality lead to a rejection of the analysis's 'reality', reducing the political factor, the national factor, etc., to mere economics. In this frame of thought there is no place for imperialism; it is just a universal political fact ('the strong are the masters'). The doctrinaires go so far as to argue that imperialism is a thing of the past, in contradiction with the 'spirit of capitalism'! The refusal of populations to bow to the requirements of 'development' is always a conservative reaction by the backward who reject the progress that is offered them on a plate . . . A hint of racism comes to the surface now and then in this argument.

It is true that the European labour movement has sometimes shared this view of Asia, Africa and Latin America with the bourgeoisie. The Second International was known to sing the praises of the civilizing mission of colonization, although there were some hesitations that people are too ready to forget . . . The Third International began by reacting more radically; later, it retreated here or there for reasons of Moscow's political convenience. Sometimes in its enthusiastic condemnation, it has 'simplified' the issue with such statements as 'capitalist expansion is over and done with!'

More often it has (as with other 'classic' texts) given Lenin's analyses of imperialism an absolute and dogmatic meaning. But the specific contradictions of capitalist expansion are a reality such that the peoples of this Third World, when invited to surrender themselves to the inexorable law of profit – for their

greater good! – have revolted *en masse*. Thus, for half a century the national liberation struggles have stirred millions of combatants. Some of these struggles – in China and Vietnam – have been led by political forces which claimed to be Marxist and which have wrought social changes that to say the least were not part of the crude logic of the exigencies of world capitalism! Others have not gone so far and the bourgeoisies which have inherited power have found, or tried to find, their place within the world system. So, for thirty years, the left forces of the world have been encouraged by these struggles to reflect on their own analyses: why was national liberation led by a communist party in this instance, and by non-socialist forces in another? What were the special characteristics of this capitalist expansion which brought on to the agenda this 'curious' progression from less developed capitalism to the avowed transition to socialism? This favourable situation has brought promising results: people dared to think, dared to act . . . dared to go further than the cold words of Moscow suggested . . . But, as is normal, it nurtured new illusions based on simplifications: the expansion of capitalism was 'over and done with', the socialist transition was 'guaranteed', sometimes even the 'anti-imperialist' bourgeoisie was recruited into the socialist camp. 'Pure' Marxism can never exist. Intellectuals of various origins flocked to the camp of the critique of capitalism; and some carried in their baggage their own views with all their contradictions, and sometimes their populist nostalgia. In the heat of battle, strong expressions have come to light such as 'development of under-development', 'imperialist domination or revolution', 'lumpen-bourgeoisie, lumpen-development', etc. In their proper context, these expressions have a meaning that their critics of today seem incapable of understanding.

For here we are suddenly brought back to the baldest of bourgeois interpretations of reality. We take Bill Warren's book cited earlier as an example of this amazing retreat of revolutionary Marxism. The description Warren gives us of capitalist expansion, his enthusiastic tone, the 'realities' he takes into account and those he omits produce what can be read any day in the contemporary press of the right, as Alain Lipietz[7] notes, in his amusement at seeing New Left Books and Verso publicize the book as 'original and iconoclastic'. Here the New Left meets the conventional right. Dudley Seers[8] had already noted this 'convergence'. Alain Lipietz in a more severe criticism also stresses the anti-Third World tone and an 'Anglo-Saxon' arrogance verging on presumption and racism.

The thesis is simple: on the one hand, capitalism, even when it has been brought from abroad by colonization, must destroy all the archaic, pre-capitalist forms and replace them with the capital–labour relationship; on the other hand, capital accumulation is synonymous with progress and constant improvement in standards of living of the greatest number. As for proof, strictly nothing but the rates of growth of GDP and industrial production!

If the expression 'capitalist' is replaced by the more neutral one of 'developmental' in the work in question, Bill Warren's book turns into the very image of a World Bank report.

Warren does not pose the question: why, despite the principle being affirmed, has the capital–labour relationship not taken the place of pre-capitalist relationships more frequently over the century? The specificities of capitalist expansion here or there do not interest him. Curiously Warren and his disciples (such as Sheila Smith)[9] who are constantly harping on the need to be 'concrete' are never so themselves. They do not discuss the concrete works that try to explain why things are not as they 'should be', according to the 'general' principles of capitalism. One example: anyone who looks concretely at sub-tropical Africa cannot fail to be struck by the varying forms of extraction of the surplus labour by which capital established its domination.

One of our studies set out to analyse precisely these forms of exploitation of labour (by the traffic, labour reserves and concessionaire company economy), which enable us to understand why capital is in some circumstances interested in maintaining the pre-capitalist forms, or establishing them for its benefit (slavery in America, bantustans in South Africa, etc.). Warren simply ignores all the works of this kind. He does not cite a single one, of ours or of any other author!

To prove that the expansion of capitalism in the Third World nowadays is the same thing as the expansion of capitalism in the past and present of the West, he must resort to abstract generalities. For even at the level of a purely economic analysis, a concrete understanding would require a close examination of the character of the activities under expansion: mines, plantations and food crop agriculture, luxury goods or mass consumption industries, basic and technological industry, services and tourism, etc. are not all the same thing . . . By remaining at the level of overall growth rates, Warren wipes out thirty years of efforts to go further into concrete analysis.

Finally, Warren's apologetic prejudice in favour of capitalism is so strong that he feels he must indulge in some acrobatics to prove that income distribution in the Third World is evolving in favour of the popular masses!

He is not alone in this desire to 'demonstrate' the opposite of the truth in this domain. Jonathan Schiffer[10] has the merit of presenting his critique as a 'refutation' of Marxism. Like Bill Warren, whom he cites specifically, he wants to demonstrate that 'socialism is not the only means of ensuring the Third World's material and cultural progress', that on the contrary, post-war capitalist industrialization of the Third World provides the solution to the problem of 'underdevelopment' and that this industrialization founded on expansion of the domestic market has already yielded remarkable results in terms of higher living standards! Schiffer therefore rejects our four sectors model and asserts that contemporary Third World industrialization is founded as it was in the West, on enlargement of the mass market for consumer goods.

The unfortunate part for Schiffer as for Warren is that reality is not in accordance with the image they want to give it. We have never pretended that imperialism would bring 'stagnation' in the Third World since, on the contrary, we tried to analyse the transformations in the international division of labour resulting from the victory of the national liberation struggles led by the Third World bourgeoisies, transformations that have provided the very basis to

permit the stage of industrialization in question. It can be noted, however, that this industrialization is accompanied by wider inequality in income distribution and that wages and returns on labour have not been increased in line with productivity. This is not a gratuitous and a priori assertion; but on the contrary results from the findings of numerous studies.[11] For example in Brazil, the basis for enlargement of the industrial market was created by a fall in wages and the opening up of a market for the middle classes, as F. H. Cardoso has shown; Patrick Clawson notes: 'The enormous increase in the Iranian internal market has been accompanied by a reduction in the share of income going to the workers.' (p. 162); R. K. Sen, cited by Barratt Brown (p. 321), indicates that in India inequality of incomes has been increasing since the 1930s, and shows that half the output of industrial goods is bought by some twenty per cent of the population; while the ECLA studies show that five per cent of the population of Latin America, who secure one third of income, consume most of the industrial production. See also our findings on the contemporary Arab economy. It is further noted that in the concrete conditions of this industrialization, the gap between the (relatively strong) progression of industrial output and the (weak) progression of industrial employment is substantially more marked than it was in the circumstances of industrialization in the West. Finally it is noted that when the dominant bourgeois hegemonic bloc has been brought round to reforms, such as the land reform, the reform remains limited, even in the most radical instances (see our studies on Egypt, Syria and Iraq, where we show that these reforms have modified distribution within the rich half of the farmers but not between it and the poor half . . .). The examples could be multiplied *ad infinitum*. All these realities neglected by Schiffer, Warren and others mean that Third World industrialization does not replicate the model of the developed world: Rostow's thesis of stages of growth, to which these authors finally belong, remains a superficial illusion.

It is interesting to note that the World Bank – which is not particularly prone to speak ill of capitalism – has been obliged to observe, through the voice of its chief expert, Hollis Chenery, that in the Third World the general trend is to aggravation of inequality. If the World Bank is right then of necessity the industries that pursue this domestic market are destined for 'luxury' consumption (the qualification is obviously relative). Schiffer's statistical acrobatics cannot demonstrate the opposite.

Warren seeks an escape by drawing on one of Chenery's World Bank colleagues, M. S. Ahluwalia, who has tried to soften Chenery's findings. Ahluwalia concludes that the trend to growing inequality is 'transitory'!

If, as has been established, the tendency in the expansion of capitalism to the periphery is to growing equality (if labour incomes here do not keep pace with productivities . . .) and to the subjection of pre-capitalist modes rather than their radical destruction (the two things go together), then specific political effects are created for the exploited classes. At least as long as the tendencies are in operation. To say that they are transitory (valid for another half century? Warren does not say) is precisely to eliminate the political aspect from the discussion. For the political attitudes of classes and social forces flow from

their real situation and their prospects in the foreseeable future, not from theoretical (and in every respect untried) prospects in an unforeseeable future . . .

If a positive explanation of Warren's thesis gives only meagre results, his way of rejecting the contrary thesis sins by even more striking frivolity. In a few pages he throws out the 'three theses' of his opponents.

First, he says there is no absolute drainage of surplus from the peripheries to the centres since investment creates income! Warren clearly recognizes only nominal income and market prices, and ignores that the transfer of value is built into the structure of prices. Doubtless Warren like so many others is a follower of Sraffa rather than Marx and rejects the theory of value, contenting himself with a theory of price. But then he has not answered our question, merely evaded it.

Second, Warren reduces the question of the international division of labour to the effects of elasticities of demand and the prices governing the latter. On this basis it is easy for him to refute other bourgeois theories: Myrdal's on the vicious circles of poverty, for example. But he is not answering our question.

Third, Warren, perturbed by the persistence of archaic modes of production integrated in the capitalism system, is content with saying that it is 'provisional'. Indeed it has been provisional for four centuries and not even a science fiction writer would dare to say that this provisional aspect will vanish in the coming century!

Finally, Warren tries to explain how these 'non-Marxist' theses, according to which expansion of capitalism to the periphery should have a differing political and economic character to its expansion in the centres, can arise. And he finds only one source to blame . . . Moscow. Moscow can be blamed for much, for having settled the question of the relationship between development of the forces of production and social relations in the way Stalinism did (by super-exploitation of the peasants, destruction of the worker and peasant alliance and construction of a despotic state), for having supported opportunist strategies in the Third World (the so-called 'non-capitalist' path) for reasons that have nothing to do with socialism, etc. But how can the Third International and Leninism of the 1920s be accused of being to blame for the failure of the expected revolution in the West? On the contrary, we must nowadays conclude that Lenin, out of too high a regard for the Western labour tradition, underestimated the significance of the winning over of the working classes of the West to the hegemony of their imperialist bourgeoisies.

In short, the property of Bill Warren's analysis is a degree of abstraction that makes it politically useless for anyone wanting to act in the interest of the exploited (and makes it on the contrary an apologia for capitalism). As a further reinforcement of this apologia, Warren is obliged not only to ignore the most blinding facts of the entire real history of capitalism (the persistence of indirect forms of labour exploitation), but also to falsify current realities (by pretending, against all the evidence, that the development of capitalism to the periphery has improved the lot of the populations!). It is therefore an overtly reactionary analysis, despite its pseudo-Marxist guise. Alain Lipietz, a more

severe critic than we are, says that this frankly 'disgusting' philosophy is 'the best present which "Western Marxism" has made of late to the Muslim Brotherhood'. The accusation is no calumny since Warren in effect opposes the anti-capitalist revolts of the Third World by describing them as reactionary utopias. Warren therefore forgets the essential: 1) Capitalism does develop the forces of production, but, as Marx himself makes clear, to the detriment of the true wealth: the producer and nature. 2) There are other ways of developing the forces of production in our era, which are objectively possible (that can be done better: China does better than India . . .) and which make the capitalist path not only avoidable but irrelevant. 3) The forces of progress are not those aligned with the requirements of capitalist accumulation but those struggling against it.

Warren's work would not have merited so much attention if it had not been typical of a 'rising' current in 'Western Marxism'. It is not the only one: Arghiri Emmanuel's mischievous pleading on behalf of the technology of the multinationals[12] is another example.

Capitalist expansion to the periphery: questions posed by the real history

Warren's thesis does not discuss the special characteristics of capitalist expansion in the Third World, not even the 'economic' specificities, still less their political consequences. It decrees that there are none . . . It ignores the real history and is content with an abstract myth.

But as there are consequences and to consider the more serious arguments about them, we must begin by briefly recalling them. Let us recall the essence of our views on these issues, namely:

a) In the capitalist mode of production, the value of labour power (in empirical terms, real wages) depends on the development of the forces of production (labour productivity). But in the world capitalist system, the prices of labour power are unequally distributed around this value, higher in the centres and lower in the peripheries. The system of prices that results from this structure of the distribution of the prices of labour power governs a particular international division of labour and exchanges that may be described as unequal, in the sense that the system of prices on which they are founded includes a transfer of value from the peripheries to the centres.

b) The worldwide expansion of capitalism is founded on this unequal fashioning of the formations integrated in the world system being formed, hence in continual development. This fashioning is not the resultant of a simple 'external' balance of forces, the imposition on the backward societies of the political yoke of the advanced capitalist societies, but results from the social ways and means through which capitalism penetrates then dominates the others. These ways and means, which might be described as the manipulation *of alliances and conflicts of classes that are 'transnational' (on the scale of the*

system and not solely of the formations that comprise it). fashion specific modes of exploitation of labour power: in the centres, predominance of the direct relation of capital–wage labour exploitation. in the peripheries. persistence of relations of exploitation operating through reproduction of pre- or non-capitalist relations. From this real form of exploitation results the divergent dynamic of the price of labour power (real wages, real income of petty commodity producers integrated in the system . . .): in the centre, a parallel growth of this price of labour power and productivity; at the periphery, the absence of such parallelism. In this definition the formations of the centre may be described as autocentric in the sense that their external relations are subjected to the logic of autonomous internal accumulation (but not autarkic. and therefore still partly determined by these external relations). while the rates and forms of accumulation in the peripheral formations are determined much *more by the external constraints to which the local systems seek a response* through adjustment.

c) The social system of world capitalism is therefore constituted not by the bourgeoisie–proletariat duo in simple expansion. but by a more complex grouping of central bourgeoisies and peripheral bourgeoisies plus other exploiting classes ('feudalisms', 'chiefdoms', etc.) – middle classes emerging from the unequal world development – plus exploited peasantries–segmented proletariat, etc. The relative positions of one class to another must be grasped within the global framework that encloses the national and local frameworks.

d) If the division of the system into centres and peripheries goes back to the very origins of the formation of capitalism, the character of this division has evolved with the stages of accumulation. What is new since the end of the 19th century is the following: i) Until then it was possible for a new bourgeoisie to constitute itself at the national level and join the world system; there was no contradiction between the emergence of new centres and the worldwide expansion of the system; thereafter there has been such a contradiction that the power of the domination of 'monopoly' capital (of oligopolies in fact) obliges the new bourgeoisies to enrol in the logic of the strategy of monopoly capital but as comprador partners. ii) The strengthened positions of capital in the centres of the system have permitted the 'social-democratic alliance' of capital with the majority of the local working class, as the latter abandons its plan for a classless society (this alliance does not preclude division of the working class, exclusion of women, denial of rights to immigrant workers, etc.). These positions have also made possible a significant numerical rise in the 'middle' classes (outclassing the working class). whose very existence is linked to the dominant position held by the centres in the world system. iii) At the periphery, the development of the forces of production operating in this – national and global – social framework brings in its train specific contradictions: between the nascent working class and local and world capital, between the exploited peasantry and the 'feudal' mercantile and bureaucratic forms of their exploitation, between the middle strata and the comprador political power, between some sections of the bourgeoisie and foreign or comprador capital, etc.

e) The real mode of expansion of capitalism has thus postponed the prospect of a 'socialist revolution' in the developed centres and created conditions for a potentially revolutionary explosion in the peripheries. This mode of expansion might be described as a transfer of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism from its centres to its peripheries. This contradiction sets the increasing productive capacity of capital against the capacity for absorption that capitalist domination tends to reduce; in social terms it sets capital unequally against all the classes it exploits in varying ways. This contradiction has specific and ambivalent forms by virtue of its transfer linked to the reproduction of indirect forms of exploitation of labour power. The real worldwide expansion of capital has therefore put on the agenda a form of 'transition' to an alternative social system that was not forecast: a series of revolutions of 'national liberation' in the weakest links of the periphery where ingredients of bourgeois revolution and ingredients of socialist revolution are inextricably mixed. The outcome of this 'transition' is unpredictable since it depends on the political struggles determining its course, and such outcome may be socialist (in the sense of abolition of class) or statist (in the sense of the 'revisionist' model thrown into huge relief by the contemporary Soviet reality), or even no more than a transition towards a higher stage of capitalist development. The question of 'delinking' flows from this historical situation: it is impossible for the forces aspiring to direct the outcome of the contradictions towards socialism to surrender by too close an integration into the world system, and to the influences of the logic of capital.

f) It may be regretted that this transition is not 'pure socialist', but there are no other possibilities in the foreseeable future determined by the actual social forces shaped by capitalist development as it is; but it can only be said that capitalism is not like that and, as in Warren, it is turned into a 'pure' abstraction tending to do what it has never done to date, in the 17th and 18th centuries, or in the 19th century, or our own: homogenize the world on the basis of the spread of the direct capital–wage labour relationship.

In a work on Marxist theories of imperialism, less tendentious than Warren's, Anthony Brewer does try to challenge the analysis of capitalist expansion in terms of the centres–peripheries opposition.[13]

Brewer argues in effect that this dichotomy is founded on a false theory of wages. According to him, under the capitalist mode of production, wages do not depend on the productivity of labour. The reason being that profit is invested not only in the production of consumer goods, but also in that of the means of production. But what use are these means of production, except to produce consumer goods? Not at all, Brewer tells us, explicitly taking up the 'roundabout' thesis of Tugan-Baranowsky: the production of means of production can be used indefinitely to produce other means of production . . . This proposition remains in our view an absurdity.

The model we have constructed illustrates this necessary relationship between the value of labour power and the level of development of the forces of production. This appears evident if the following conditions are met: a) the

dynamic equilibrium must be achieved within a time limit. for example a cycle of *n* years during which the available means of production are utilized finitely to produce consumer goods that must find an outlet; b) that the wages distributed go on consumption and the profits to accumulation (or a given proportion of incomes goes to 'savings'); and c) the technology is a given.

Tugan-Baranowsky's roundabout does not function in a capitalist system since, if the consumer goods do not find an outlet within a given time, the investment goods become unsaleable in turn and there is a crisis (that is what crisis is). The perpetual roundabout could function only if the sole owner of profit (the state for example) decided to invest indefinitely in the production of means of production, without being concerned with final consumption whose growth might then be held back indefinitely.

The parcelling of capital makes this kind of dynamic equilibrium without a crisis impossible if wages do not rise in relation to productivity. And that is why we refuse to reduce the statist model to a variant of capitalism.

Bettelheim, by refusing to give the parcelling of capital the character of an independent variable in the capitalist mode, was constrained, as has been remarked above, to construct a false analogy between the 'Soviet crises' of the 1930s and the capitalist crisis. The frenetic accumulation of the 1930s in the USSR was certainly disordered and the fantastic 'plans' deranged: the 'agreed' take-off could not be collected as a result of the resistance of the producers, and the enormous waste that occurred, etc. But this kind of crisis has nothing to do with what follows, in capitalism, from a disequilibrium between the capacity to produce and the capacity to consume, a consequence of the contradiction between the social nature of production and its private control, expressed in class struggle.

It is understood that dynamic equilibrium does not imply that wages must rise at a rate determined by the progress of productivities in the classic two Departments of the analysis, if a third Department is introduced: luxury consumption fuelled by the expenditure of profit or collective consumption (military or social . . .). The logic of capitalism precludes an adjustment by the automatic expenditure of excess profits on luxury consumption: competition forbids it. By contrast, state intervention changes the conditions of the equilibrium, as Baran and Sweezy have shown in introducing the concept of surplus so little understood by most of their critics. Brewer rejects this whole contribution from Baran and Sweezy by countering with the same argument, Tugan-Baranowsky's roundabout. But the question posed by Baran and Sweezy is real: what are the functions and dynamic of growth in public spending in advanced capitalism? Brewer is silent on this point.

Of course the necessary strict relationship implies that the technologies (or their rates of advance) are a given. But they are not, and they are in part the results of capital's strategies in response to class struggle. We are well aware that technology is not neutral.

We have therefore shown that it was impossible to establish a mechanical economic model where the economic aggregates would be determined solely by their mutual relationships. This dialectic of the objective forces (the

relationship in question) and subjective forces (the relationship between class struggle and technology) clearly indicates the frontiers of political economy, the limits from which we must move on to a richer level of analysis, defining historical materialism. Sheila Smith does not seem to accept the existence of these limits and this dialectic, and believes that on this point she has discovered a tautology in our demonstration. How then does she understand what Marx means by a critique of political economy?

The real question raised over the schema is not whether there is a link between the value of labour power and development of the forces of production (since this link exists), but on what scale does it operate: of the capitalist nation-state or the world capitalist system? If we have opted for the latter, it is not by virtue of an a priori dogmatic theory. It is simply because this response is imperative for anyone who believes it necessary to explain the reality and not some unreal abstraction. The reality is that the expansion of capitalism, far from homogenizing things by generalizing the capital–wage labour relationship and making productivities uniform, has had the opposite effect of differentiating the centres (where, as can easily be seen, real wages do rise along with productivity) from the peripheries (where in fact incomes from labour are unconnected with the development of the forces of production). It follows that the equilibrium in question, which must be found at the global level, implies that a more rapid rise in wages at one pole has its counterpart in relative stagnation (or even deterioration) of income from labour at the other pole. This is the precise meaning of the law of value operating on the real scale of the system. It is why an overthrow of the relation of capitalist exploitation in general and the specific imperialist super-exploitation of producers in the periphery demands delinking.

The debate on unequal exchange has, in our opinion, the merit of enjoining a clear definition of the consequences of the actual worldwide expansion of capitalism: that differentials in wages (and labour incomes in general) are wider than the differentials in productivities from one formation to another, that this polarity does not operate within each formation treated in isolation, but within the global system. Evidently the analysis of the worldwide expansion of the system in these terms and of the related 'transfer of value' is comprehensible only if the necessity is admitted of going beyond appearances (the nominal prices and income of the bourgeois economy) to grasp the essential dynamic of value. An economist content to stay at the level of immediate realities – observed prices – is evading the issue. For him 'exchange' is always profitable by definition. Such economists are numerous nowadays in the field of Marxism: all those who opt for Sraffa and the neo-Ricardian analysis, in the belief that the theory of value is a 'useless detour'. Brewer is one of them and admits it (p. 29). Warren too apparently, to judge by the way he responds (or rather fails to respond) to the question of transfer of value. Sheila Smith, like the others, has the right to be a follower of Sraffa but probably does not realize it since she argues only in terms of price, but is astonished that we should write 'a "vulgar economist" would regard the income of each class as a measure of its contribution to production, since "vulgar economists" are concerned only with

"appearances", (i.e. prices)', and not with essences (values). She explicitly rejects the distinction between appearances and essences and regards it as one of the ways in which 'Amin attempts to immunize himself from criticisms'(!). Hardly surprising in these circumstances that she loses her way in what we have said!

A further clarification: recognition of a transfer of value from the peripheries to the centres does not entail that the development of the centres should be 'due' to this transfer. The progress of productivity at the centre is the principal reality. The transfer of value speeds up accumulation at the centre, and at the periphery slows it down and gives it a different direction, that is all. But it must be said, since Warren and even Brewer and others feel themselves obliged to reject the centre/periphery analysis by attributing to its supporters the simplistic and false idea that 'the underdevelopment of some is the cause of development in others'. There is a connection, that is all.

It is well understood that unequal exchange with this definition is not absolutely specific to centres/peripheries relations. Sheila Smith seeks to argue from this to deny the specificity of the centres/peripheries distinction since there are (similar?) differences between the various centres and the various peripheries. She declares in effect that if unequal exchange results from a wider gap between wages than productivities, then unequal exchange is possible between Great Britain and the United States for example in the same way as between centres and peripheries. Has Sheila Smith not read what we have already written on this subject? Yes, but . . . In the long run, between all the countries of the centre, the gaps between wages and productivities tend to be of the same magnitude. The disequilibriums with the effect of exchanges tending incessantly in one direction or the other are transitory and can be corrected by the usual bourgeois policies (changes in exchange rate, monetary or Keynesian policies, etc.). By contrast, the social dynamic is different in the peripheries, where the long-term trend is not a parallel progression of wages and productivities. That is the difference explaining why the same policies, advocated by, say, the IMF, do not have the same effects everywhere . . .

So why does capital not rush from the centres to go and invest massively in the peripheries where the rate of exploitation of labour is higher? It is the question that Brewer addresses (p. 249). The very simple reply to him is that capital cannot see the varying rates of exploitation and decide on this basis. What capital sees is the rate of profit and that is equalized by the fact that the varying rates of exploitation determine a system of prices – the basis on which capital acts – which equalize the rates of profit. The transfer of capital to the periphery, on the basis of a rate of exploitation practised there, would moreover upset the equilibrium that must be recovered at the global level. Finally, the transfer is itself limited by the (indirect) forms of exploitation that are the condition of the high rate of exploitation. What Brewer fails to see (since he refuses to raise himself to the level of values and prefers to remain at the empirical level of prices), is that the limitations of political economy are being reached here, and the issue is one of historical materialism and not political economy.

Moreover, it was consciousness of these limits that led us from unequal development still situated on the terrain of political economy to the law of value and historical materialism and to *Class and Nation*, works situated on the more fertile ground of historical materialism.

Brewer, by desiring to remain on the ground of political economy, drives himself into a cul-de-sac. After rejecting the liaison value of labour power/development of the forces of production, he does not know what to put in its place and admits to having no theory of the wage (p. 30). Let us add that he then has no explanation for a salient fact: why are wages in the United States substantially higher than those in India?

The analysis of the worldwide expansion of capitalism in terms of centres and peripheries has come under an increasing attack in recent years that cannot be dissociated from the general crisis, initiated more than a decade ago, and the 'anti-Third-World' reactions it has provoked in the West. That is why most of these critics, when they do not blatantly join the imperialist bourgeoisie's camp as Warren does, preach a return to the original fold: whether in the Trotskyist tradition, the incantation that the working classes of the developed world remain the sole bearers of the socialist future; or in the tradition of the Third International, falling back on the Soviet Union (whose balance sheet is gratuitously marked 'positive overall'), as friend of Third World peoples, without taking the trouble to analyse Soviet society or situate the character of its conflict with the United States and hence its strategies. These critics are generally content with invective, the analysis in question being described as 'circulationist' or 'dependentista', or 'Third-Worldist' (finally 'bourgeois nationalist', etc.) on the fragile basis of an amalgamation and extrapolation of the terminology employed by one or other of the authors under criticism, with the terminology given an arbitrary interpretation that is often the exact opposite of the meaning it had in context.

A rapid *tour d'horizon* of the critics in question shows that they have usually not really read what they are talking about.[14] Many of these critics joust against a terminology without any concern for the meaning given to it.

The expression 'distortion' has given rise to endless meaningless expositions. It is true that it might suggest there is a 'model' of 'true capitalism', which would be a major contradiction with the notion that centre and periphery are the face and obverse of the same phenomenon: the development of capitalism. Sheila Smith indulges in a useless exercise of this kind. She does not see that it is merely a question of semantics and that the expression, in the context of its usage in our works, signifies special characteristics arising from the conjuncture between certain local structures, and class struggles and integration in the global capitalist system. A second expression that gives rise to similar abuse is that of 'marginalization'. People seem to believe that it is a phenomenon of exclusion from the system and they complain of a scandalous dualism; what they should appreciate is that it concerns indirect, not immediately obvious, forms of exploitation (cf. for example our studies on the role of labour 'reserves' and bantustans in the reproduction of the labour force

in Africa). There is even an incorrect reading of the expression 'blockage', which is interpreted as a synonym of stagnation in the everyday meaning of the word (nothing changes). The model of 'blockage' we give (even if the expression is ill-chosen) is of a succession of phases of rapid growth fuelled from abroad and crises engendered precisely by the absence of an internal driving force. The history of the Third World is full of concrete examples of this kind of crisis (different from crises in the centre, cf. above).

A clear-sighted observer such as Patrick Clawson gives a concrete example in Iran, where 'capital accumulation is limited by foreign exchange' (p. 158); however, he believes it useful to joust: 'The theory that capitalism in the "periphery" can only develop when the ties with the world market are broken is expounded by S. Amin' (p. 169)! These crises of the model of peripheral expansion of capitalism are precisely the points at which the cherished plan for a bourgeois national development goes wrong and gives way to a recompradorization of the local bourgeoisie.

This kind of criticism makes its task easy by inventing such phantoms as the 'dependentista theory' or 'Third-Worldist theory' then attributing it to X or Y without bothering to see whether what X or Y has said is in accordance with these 'theories'. It is the familiar process of amalgamation.

So the description as 'dependentista' or 'Third-Worldist' is given to the analysis of the concrete specificities of capitalist expansion, which have the precise effect of preventing development at the periphery replicating the history of development of the centres. This 'dependentism' and 'Third-Worldism' is then described as an ideology of the national bourgeoisies. And the trick is taken. It is all the easier since there is obviously no 'dependentista theory' or 'Third-Worldist theory', but simply authors of the most varied kind who have thought about the special characteristics of capitalist expansion here or there and have sometimes generalized some propositions, but nothing more.

Bill Warren thus defines a 'dependenista' theory (p. 160) which does not hold water since the issue of the mechanisms (causes) that have engendered the aforementioned 'dependency' is not discussed. But it is by raising this issue that the fundamental subject of class, class struggles, international class alliances and conflicts can be tackled: the social-democratic alliance at the centre, comprador bourgeoisie and potentially revolutionary worker and peasant block at the periphery, etc. If this essential element is removed from the analysis, it becomes evident that the so-called 'theory', which ignores class and puts nations in their place (a 'charge' evidently taken up by Sheila Smith!), can be contrasted with 'Marxism' founded on a class analysis. As for the very expression of dependence, it is all too commonplace and it is difficult to see why it should be forbidden to observe that the economy of Guatemala 'is dependent on' that of the United States. That this commonplace does not constitute a 'theory' we have ourselves written with regard to the so-called Latin American 'dependentista' current. We indicated that if Canada is evidently 'dependent' on the United States, this does not make it 'peripheral' since in Canada as in the United States wages and productivity go hand in hand. Barratt Brown (p. 276) makes the same observation with regard to Australia. Doubtless Bill Warren is

not aware that we have anticipated the question. And when he writes (p. 118): 'Why, for example, was direct US investment in Europe not imperialist, whereas in Guatemala it was?', we would reply: since the wages in Guatemala are not the same as those in Europe!

The question of 'delinking' also gives rise to unreal interpretations unrelated to the thesis we support. It is astonishing to see the 'break with the world market' theory treated in terms of the will of the bourgeoisie (by Patrick Clawson, p. 145).

This is the exact opposite of what we wrote: the Third World bourgeoisies cannot conceive of development other than by integration in the global system; delinking is, on the contrary, a demand for a national and popular construction, and the two characteristics are indissolubly linked. It is because the hegemonic blocks of the so-called 'progressive' Third World countries were not, or are not, exactly popular that they cannot seriously envisage this strategy. Clearly, the option for delinking implemented in situations of radicalization (USSR, China, Vietnam . . .) is not the 'end of the story'; it does not solve the question of the outcome of the struggle between the socialist path and the revisionist path; and it is evident that when the latter path is imposed, there is an increasing tendency for reintegration in the world system but with no longer the – subordinate – status of the countries dominated by imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie.

Finally, the political objective of this 'critique' is seen in its true colours when Sheila Smith inveighs against our political conclusion that 'delinking' is a precondition for a serious attempt to develop the forces of production differently and better than by comprador capitalism; she writes: 'Amin would probably regard the policies being pursued in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe as disastrous, since they involve complex negotiations with various capitalist agencies. Some would think it fortunate that Amin's political influence has not been extended to those countries.' Unfortunately, the 'semi-socialist' experiences of the Third World (Nasserist Egypt, for example . . .) did not delink and this is the reason for their subsequent failure (recompradorization of Sadat's Egypt in this instance . . .). And if the Soviet Union and China have managed to build themselves up as autonomous forces in our world (whatever the social character of this construction and its future), it is certainly because they did delink. Who is defending the Third World bourgeoisie: us or Shelia Smith?

An infinite number of examples could be given of criticisms of the kind addressed to the analysis of the worldwide expansion of capitalism in terms of centres and peripheries. Ingredients of this kind of critique can be found even scattered throughout otherwise interesting case studies. Generally these superficial observations add nothing to the study in question but rather contradict what emerges from the concrete analysis.

One example among many: Patrick Clawson, in his interesting study on Iran notes (p. 162): 'The enormous increase in the Iranian internal market has been accompanied by a reduction in the share of income going to the workers; it has been investment and luxury consumption which have provided the growing

market.' It is our thesis. So what is the point of a statement of 'principle' against the thesis of the specificity of capitalist development in the periphery?

Conclusion: political economy or historical materialism?

According to the critics considered in this study there are two views of the problem of expansion of capitalism on a world scale, one according to which the inequalities in this development are due to causes internal to the societies (their class structures and modes of production) and another according to which these inequalities have their origin in the action of external forces (external domination). The second set of theories (centres/peripheries, dependentism, etc.) was gradually built up from the starting point of Lenin's *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, considered as a weak work, and at an apotheosis in the 1960s; the first symbolized among others by Warren, who is a critic of the second, purports to be a return to Marxist orthodoxy. Brewer (p. 16) summarizes the situation in this way.

Such a presentation of the question is vitiated from the start. It has been shown here that the 'theory of internal causes' rests on the narrowest interpretation of Marxism, the most one-sided interpretation of the progressive role of development of the forces of production by capitalism. It is a theory of the fundamentalist economistic kind that evades the question posed by life. It therefore has no political application in the sense that it has nothing to offer the exploited; they must wait . . . It wears a 'purist' Marxist garb and on the excuse that classes constitute the fundamental social reality, decrees that only classes grasped at the immediate level in their local (or national) environment constitute the 'internal forces' that act and determine the movement.

By contrast, analyses produced in the framework of the so-called global problematic have provided answers or at least parts of the answer to the real questions posed by history. The critics of these analyses have had to resort to systematic unfairness to escape from their arguments. For global analysis does not preclude that of the local and national forces, but readily encompasses it.

In this regard Brewer's presentation of the works of Wallerstein and Frank is grossly unjust. The significance attached to 'refutations' of Frank by Laclau and Brenner is distorting. Does it add anything to call the mode of exploitation of labour in colonial America 'feudal' – it was sometimes even slave-owning? Not much, if it is borne in mind that this mode was articulated with nascent capitalism as slavery in the United States was articulated with British capitalism already ripe in the mid-19th century, and as P.-P. Rey's 'colonial mode' operated in the mid-20th century . . . The factor that remains to be explained is that capitalism went so far as to 'create' apparently archaic modes of exploitation of labour. The debate on the 'modes of production' mentioned at length by Brewer, no matter how interesting the contributions (and this they were), is by no means 'decisive'. It does not refute the need to discuss questions of the integration of the gamut of these modes in a world system that can only be described as capitalist.

By the same token, the judgement expressed on the Latin American 'dependentista school' is unjust. For it omits to note that the ideology prevailing at the time was '*desarrollismo*' according to which capitalist development (with foreign capital and technology, under the aegis of local bourgeoisies) would 'solve the problems' of the continent's backwardness, raise the standards of living of the greatest number, permit the use of democracy, etc. It was an ideology very close to Warren's, as can be seen. But the facts contradicted this ideology: inequality increased and democracy did not arrive. The reaction to these facts was to discover that the development of capitalism here operated on different bases from those on which it had been constituted elsewhere and, that among other things, imperialist domination prevented an interpretation of history in terms of similar stages merely staggered in time, à la Rostow (and Warren). Whatever the simplifications in one or other of these analyses, or mistakes even, they put their finger on the spot. It was possible to go further than them, which was the case and which Warren failed to see, as Lipietz notes; it was not possible to go backwards.

The same may be said of the injustice done to the Lenin of *Imperialism*. Certainly it is a 'pamphlet' that borrows too readily from Hobson and Hilferding (*Finance Capital*, for example). But Lenin did manage to put his finger on the realities, including one decisive at the time – conflict among the Powers, even if the conflict became less acute 30 years later, after 1945; the other still dominant nowadays – the winning over of the Western working classes. Even the Leninist thesis of the 'parasitism of the nations of the West', if its form (the 'coupon clippers') is debatable, retains some meaning; is there not in these societies as a result of the unequal international division of labour, a 'tertiary' sector which would be impossible without it and which makes the working class a minority? Is not the Britain of today with its capital invested elsewhere than in the renewal of its own industry 'parasitic'? Does not the appropriation of the natural resources of the whole world for the consumption of this minority, rendering it impossible to extend the same life style to the whole world, deserve to be described as parasitism? Lenin is open to criticism such as Arrighi's on the question of inter-imperialist conflict. It is possible to go further than Lenin on the question of the centres/peripheries dichotomy, which was not a sudden appearance of 1870 but (contrary to Warren's supposition) took on a new dimension from the end of the last century; but it is not possible to reduce *Imperialism* to its shortcomings.

The 'theory' that rejects analysis of capitalist expansion in centre/periphery terms stops at the threshold of the real questions. Barratt Brown after posing the crucial question – 'Can the main underdeveloped countries achieve economic development within the general economic structure of the capitalist world?' (p. 307) – observes that Warren cannot show that the most dynamic countries of the Third World are, as yet, independent centres of capital accumulation (p. 272) and recognizes that the association of local capital with the transnationals has created a new kind of local comprador capitalism, albeit moving into manufacturing industry (p. 269). Brewer may well say: 'I see no reason why an independent capitalist class should not be formed on the basis of

export led industrialization or copying of technologies;' (p. 289), the question is whether such a class exists or is constituted somewhere. The questions our critics do not ask – whether the Third World bourgeoisie is comprador or not – are the real questions posed by history.

There are, indeed, two schools of thought but they should not be described as they are by our critics. We see a school that goes no further than political economy, another that sets itself the much more ambitious aim of carrying the analysis to the level of historical materialism. We know that linguistic usage is different in Britain and in continental Europe. In Britain, 'political economy' (as distinct from bourgeois 'economics') is synonymous with historical materialism.

'Economics' is a false science, not because its propositions are 'false' but in the sense that it presents the reflection of social contradictions as forces external to the society (the 'economic laws'), analogous to the forces of nature. Marx makes a fundamental critique of this in *Capital*, that is he shows precisely this. And for such a demonstration the appearance–essence, price–value dialectic is essential. We do not see how anyone can be Marxist and reject this critique and its implications. Of course anyone who wants to call himself a Marxist may; there is no Pope to contradict him; but the right to hold a different opinion remains. When this critique is made it is an invitation to go further, not to remain on the terrain of economics – even political economy in the sense of critique of economy. Historical materialism is in this sense richer, and destined to perpetual enrichment: the concepts discovered by Marx (the modes of production, the corresponding social classes, the nations, the superstructural forms of societies, etc.) are relative to the societies known to him in his time.

Marxism viewed thus is not a political economy but synonymous with historical materialism. It then becomes a method and not a doctrine, one 'theory' among others, that is one enunciating the results of an inquiry. Marxism is only a guide to this inquiry. Doubtless Sheila Smith rejects the distinction. Although she declares herself a Marxist, she rejects the distinction between essence and appearance, value and price, the dialectic of objective forces (economic laws) and subjective forces (class struggles) . . . and pretends that this is one of the ways in which Samir Amin 'attempts to immunize himself from criticisms'! But does she realize that this critique is one addressed by bourgeois economists to Marxism in general? Why does she refuse to see Marxism as a method (enabling us to know why a reality is A or non-A) and not a doctrine (asserting that the reality is A or non-A)? Why does she refuse to see that this method is situated at the level of historical materialism and not of political economy? Does reducing the former to the latter merely testify to the decisive influence of empirical positivism in the British tradition of which Sheila Smith has not rid herself? In fact, she takes us to task for not identifying the economic determinants independent of the reality of class struggle, as vulgar economists do (the expression is Marx's and not Samir Amin's!).[15]

The standpoint of historical materialism enables us to raise the very

problems that our opponents evade.

This fundamental question of compradorization for instance. Only a concrete economic and political analysis will enable us to pose the question of the real differences between 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' capitalist societies. And from the starting point of this concrete analysis can be developed a further reflection on the character of the Third World bourgeoisie in question, its limited capability to fulfil the historic role that the bourgeoisie has played elsewhere, in a word the issue of compradorization, a question that evidently neither Warren nor his disciples pose.

For a bourgeoisie to constitute itself as a dominant national force capable of developing the forces of production with the minimum of autonomy, it must be capable of controlling national reproduction of the labour force (hence agriculture–industry relations), technology, the markets and circuits for collecting capitals, etc. If it does not succeed, it is compradorized and therefore incapable of fulfilling the historical role expected of it.

These questions must be discussed on this terrain, which is among others that of our concrete studies of a certain number of cases of modern peripheral capitalist development and our concrete studies of the strategies of the Third World bourgeoisie (NIEO, etc.). Warren and his disciples steer well clear. Sheila Smith, a follower of Warren, the negationist *par excellence* of the concrete analysis, whom she cites as reference, claims in the face of any elementary objectivity that we reject concrete analyses! (On this point see the reply that Aidan Foster-Carter makes indirectly in his introduction to the English language edition of *The Arab Economy Today*).[16] On the contrary, we take very seriously the concrete discussions on this question of compradorization (see for example the debate on the Kenyan bourgeoisie). If our current position should be shaded, modified, completed or abandoned, it is on this ground of historical materialism and on this ground alone that the reflection should be conducted.

Historical materialism enables us to posit political problems – as is essential for anyone who understands Marxism as a way of changing the world and not as an academic discipline. The problem of 'nationalism', for example: according to our critics, nationalism is in all circumstances the enemy of socialism. I should concur that the support given by parties claiming to be Marxist to the local bourgeoisies of the Third World in the name of 'anti-imperialist national unity' is the enemy of socialism. But we did not need to wait for our critics to learn this, as we had long before denounced this opportunism and shown that, contrary to its claims, such opportunism contributes to easing the surrender of the endlessly compradorized local bourgeoisies to monopoly capital. By contrast, when these parties have rejected this strategy so as to engage in the struggle against the bourgeoisie in the very name of socialism and nationalism, they have succeeded in radicalizing the national liberation struggle, and giving it a wider and stronger dimension. Are not China and Vietnam examples of this? Certainly this struggle is not the end of history but opens up a new chapter in the fight between socialism and, if not capitalism, at least the revisionist impasse.

But this is not far enough. The problem described as 'cultural' for want of a better expression is not a false problem since it is a social and historical reality. The problem must therefore be integrated into the analysis of historical materialism. This task perhaps remains entirely or almost entirely still to be accomplished.[17] But that is what we meant in writing that if 'Mexico were to become a fully developed province of the USA, then "the contradiction would shift from the economic to the cultural and political domains"' (UD, p. 381), a comment Brewer cites with some astonishment (p. 250). How is it possible to miss the relevance of the question? Patrick Clawson, in his serious study of Iran, cites a Fortune article suggesting Iran could eventually become 'a Middle Eastern West Germany' (p. 165).

The parallel between the economic reality of the Shah's Iran and of Venezuela, also presented in the same work, is striking. But in Iran this reality unleashed the Islamic revolution we know about; in Venezuela, the European spirit has led the same prospect to be received with almost general enthusiasm.

This is why we believe that dialogue with the anti-imperialist popular forces in the Third World is more necessary than ever. And in addition, since these forces are confronted by real problems, their criticisms are often more judicious than those reviewed here. In the same way, the criticisms addressed by the real social movements in the West (the Greens, the feminist movement, etc.) are more serious and more apt than most of the critiques by 'Western Marxism'.[18]

APPENDIX: On the model of autocentric accumulation.

In his book *Marxist Theories of Imperialism*, Anthony Brewer has argued that there are mistakes in our formulation of the model of accumulation (in the Appendix in *Imperialism and Unequal Development*, pp. 239–52). To the effect that by equating the amount of surplus value generated during one phase and of equipment utilized for the next phase, we have confused gross and net output. As Brewer shows, the equilibrium is reached only through the devaluation of constant capital. We repeat the model in a corrected form, retaining our own notation.

The following are the equations defining Department I (Production of means of production) and Department II (Production of consumer goods):

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{I} && e + a = pe \\ &\text{II} && e + b = qc \end{aligned}$$

where e represents unit value of equipment, c represents unit value of consumer goods, a and b are the direct labour hours required per unit of equipment in Departments I and II respectively, and p and q the physical output per unit of equipment in Departments I and II respectively.

The two pairs of the parameters a, b, p, q define the technological system. They determine the equilibrium prices e and c of the units of equipment and consumption.

Rates of technical progress are represented by the coefficients o and b (less than one) that affect the productive system in the next phase:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{I} & e + ao = pe \\ \text{II} & e + bb = qc \end{array}$$

With a global amount of labour ao + bb less than a + b it is possible through appropriate handling of equipment to obtain equal production. This handling is defined by the proportions n and l–n in which the available equipment E is shared between the two Departments.

The productive system in dynamic equilibrium, governed by the rates of progress of the productive forces o and b, is therefore:

Phase 1: Capital equipment Wages Surplus value Output

I $n1\ e1 + n1\ a\ S1 + n1\ a(K-S1) = n1pe1$
II $(1-n1)e1 + (1-n1)bS1 + (1-n1)b(K-S1) = (1-n1)qc1$

Phase 2:

I $n2e2 + n2aS2o + n2a(K-2)o = n2pe2$
II $(1-n2)e2 + (1-n2)bS2b + (1-n2)b(K-S2)b = (1-n2)qc2$

where S1 and S2 represent nominal wages (in the system of prices e, c), the expression K the corresponding net output (wages + surplus value).

Dynamic equilibrium requires:
Equation of supply/demand of consumer goods, as follows:

Phase 1 $n1\ aS1 + (1-n1)bS1 = (1-n1)qc1$
Phase 2 $n2aoS2 + (1-n2)bbS2 = (1-n2)qc2$

Equation of supply and demand of equipment is written down as:

Phase 1 $n1\ pe1 = e2$
Phase 2 $n2\ pe2 = e3$

It is this last pair of equations that corrects the error in the previously published text.

From this pair of equations the prices and proportions n may be deduced:

$e1 = a/p-1 \quad c1 = a + b(p-1)/q(p-1)$
$e2 = ao/p-1 \quad c2 = ao + bb\ (p-1)/q(p-1)\ n1=n2=o/p$

Any parameters may be used subject evidently to the condition that $p>1$ (otherwise the price e would become negative). Hence it follows that $n<1$.

The nominal wages S may then be expressed in terms of the parameters:

$S1=(1-n)\ [a+b(p-1]/(p-1)\ [an+b(1-n)]$
$S2=(1-n)\ [ao+bb(p-1)]/(p-1)\ [aon+bb(1-n)]$
with $n=o/p$

The real wages: S'1=1/c1 and S'2=S2/c2 become:

$$S'1 = (1-n)q/an+b1-n)$$
$$S'2 = (1-n)q/aon+bb(1-n)$$

It can be verified that S'2>S'1 (since the numerator remains unchanged and the denominator decreases from one phase to the other).

Our first main conclusion remains correct: dynamic equilibrium requires a growth in real wages at a rate governed by a combination of the rates of progress of the productivities o and b.

The illustrative models displayed in the text (pp. 79–83) were correct (to a multiplier coefficient of prices close to e and c, dependent on the K factors).

We have for example the first model as follows (p. 79–80)

Phase 1	*Capital equipment*		*Direct labour Output*
Department I	20 e	80 h	60 e
Department II	10 e	40 h	60 c
Total	30 e	120 h	
Phase 2			
Department I	40 e	80 h	120 e
Department II	20 e	40 h	120 c
Total	60 e	120 h	

This model evidently shows progress in the forces of production. With the equipment produced in Phase I and utilized in Phase 2, the same amount of direct labour allows, in a particular handling of its use, the production of twice as many consumer goods.

Equilibrium is achieved by a rate of surplus value of 100 per cent if the price of a unit of e is 2, of a unit of c is 1, of hourly pay 0.50 in Phase 1 and 1 in Phase 2. The values in effect are:

		Capital equipment	*Wages*	*Surplus value Output*
Phase 1:	Dept. I	40 + 40 + 40	= 120	
	Dept. II	20 + 20 + 20	= 60	
Phase 2:	Dept. I	80 + 80 + 80	= 240	
	Dept. II	40 + 40 + 40	= 120	

The wages distributed during Phase 1 (60) enable the entire output of consumer goods produced during that Phase (also 60) to be bought. As for the output of equipment goods during Phase 1 (120), it is bought by capitalists and installed to operate in Phase 2 (value of equipment installed in Phase 2: also 120). These equipment goods are shared half as value for reconstitution of productive capacity in Phase 1, and half as value (financed by the surplus value realized in Phase 1, that is 60) to install supplementary capacity. From one phase to the other, the real hourly wage is doubled and the output of consumer goods likewise.

It is useful to note here that the equipment produced in one phase does not

have the same use values as those of the equipment that has been used to produce them. With the 20 e installed in Phase 1, the output is not 60 identical e but 60 e of a new type.

For example, with steam engines the output is not more steam engines but electric motors. Otherwise there is no way to see how, with the same type of equipment, there could be doubled efficiency in the following phase. If the equipment were the same the same efficiency would be maintained, that is the same equipment/direct labour relationship. If the same amount of direct labour can create twice as much equipment in value to produce twice as much of the final output, it is because the equipment is different, new and more efficient. We have already made this observation in unpublished correspondence with Brewer.

The other models displayed in the text (pp. 81–83) in which we allow for different organic compositions or different rates of o and b, still illustrate the same main conclusion, that equilibrium requires a growth in real wages. The curiosity of the worst case 6, which contained only our initial error, disappears.

The question Rosa Luxemburg posed was not where is the market for the output, but under what conditions was it possible to realize (preliminary transformation of the output into money). We thought we had answered this question by establishing the role of credit. This answer still seems necessary, provided that the former text (p. 80) 'advance of the amount of surplus value' is replaced by 'advance of the value of the equipment produced by Department I'.

In the example chosen above, the argument is as follows: the system of credit advances to the capitalist in Departments I and II, at the beginning of Phase 2, 80F and 40F respectively with which they buy the equipment they need and which they buy from the capitalist sellers, as producers of 120F of equipment. The latter have then realized their output, including surplus value. At the end of Phase 2, these loans are repaid but new loans are sought for the purchase of equipment to be utilized at the start of Phase 3, and so on.

It is obvious that a series of successive phases can be envisaged in which the real wages would remain unchanged, or be diminished. It would be sufficient for this that the equipment was allocated to output of additional equipment in an increasing rate from one phase to another. We have given an illustration of this 'roundabout' envisaged by Tugan-Baranowsky, with an explicit reference to this author (pp. 80–81). We rejected this absurd solution, which is nothing else than Say's laws of outlet: crisis is impossible since output automatically creates its own outlet. This solution – on paper – is in contradiction with the essence of capitalism: equipment must find a user within a time limit, determined in the final resort by the capacity for consumption. We know fully well that this observation is bound to be described by some as a 'theory of under-consumption'. We reply that the question is not whether it is a view founded on the 'theory of under-consumption' (which one?) or not, but if the argument is correct and in accordance with reality or not. Describing a theory

as this or that ('under-consumption' or 'circulationism' for example) is not a refutation, but merely to substitute invective for argument and display a spirit of dogmatism.

Oddly enough – as we have pointed out – Tugan-Baranowsky's solution, which is absurd in real capitalism, could be envisaged in the hypothesis of planned statism that had the means indefinitely to defer the time limit of consumption, which in capitalism governs profitability and the investment decision. This is the case in the Soviet system.

Brewer, in order to refute our thesis, makes explicit mention of Tugan-Baranowsky. It is therefore not our error that calls our conclusions in question, but the 'roundabout' argument.

Brewer is astonished at the 'permanence' of what he regards as 'errors of judgement' ('Some errors have an amazing capacity to survive', he writes, p. 252). For us it is rather the reverse, the permanence of contradictory theses is inevitable in the social field. This is precisely what distinguishes 'social laws' from laws of 'nature'. Otherwise it is impossible to understand how Marxism, neo-Ricardianism and neo-classicism could go on co-existing . . . As for the error of judgement in question, it may well be Brewer's . . .

Brewer also notes that 'a combination of high and low wages' in the centre and the periphery 'is essentially equivalent . . . to an intermediate level of wages throughout'. Obviously, and in our analysis this 'intermediate level of wages' constitutes precisely the value of labour power, a concept that is meaningful on a world scale, like value, and meaningless on the scale of the national formations that comprise the global system. At the latter level, there are unequal prices of labour power, whose average constitutes its value.

At the centre, the prices of labour power take the form of wages; at the periphery, the situation is more complicated. The super-exploitation of labour demands the maintenance and even the establishment of pre- or non-capitalist forms, and therefore remuneration of labour is in the form of wages for only a minority of workers; for the majority the remuneration is that of the petty commodity producers (peasants and artisans).

What we call the unequal international division of labour flows from this analysis of the determination of the value and price of labour power. The expression is shorthand for a circumlocution that might be formulated as follows: 'the special characteristics of an international division of labour that results from local structures of demand differentiated by the very factor that the gap in world income distribution is more marked than in the productivities of this labour.'

Notes

1. See Bettelheim, Charles, *Les Luttes de Classe en URSS 1930–1941*, Vol. III, Paris, Seuil, 1982, and Warren, Bill, *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism*.

2. See Anderson, Perry, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London, New Left Books, 1976.

3. Beaud, Michel, *Histoire du capitalisme 1500–1980*, Paris, Seuil, 1981; *Le Socialisme à l'épreuve de l'Histoire 1800–1981*, Paris, Seuil, 1982.

4. See Kemp, Tom, *Theories of Imperialism*, London, Dobson, 1967. See also his criticism of *Class and Nation*.

5. Jacob, Alain, *Un balcon à Pékin*, Paris, Grasset, 1982.

6. Luxemburg, Rosa, *Introduction à l'économie politique*, Paris, Anthropos, 1970; Bordiga, Amadeo, *Russie et révolution dans la théorie marxiste*, Paris, Spartacus, 1978; Camatte, Jacques, *Capital et Gemeinwesen*, Paris, Spartacus, 1978; Camatte, Jacques, *Il Capitale Totale*, Rome, Dedalo Libri, 1976.

7. Lipietz, Alain, 'Marx or Rostow', *New Left Review*, No. 132, March–April, 1982, pp. 48–58.

8. Seers, Dudley, *The Congruence of Marxism and Other Neoclassical Doctrines*, UNU, 1978, mimeo.

9. Smith, Sheila, 'The Ideas of Samir Amin: Theory or Tautology', *Journal of Development Studies*, 17.1, October 1980, pp. 5–21; 'Class Analysis Versus World Systems: Critique of Samir Amin's Typology of Under-development', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 12, 1982, pp. 7–18.

10. Schiffer, Jonathan, 'The Changing Post-war Pattern of Development: the Accumulated Wisdom of Samir Amin', *World Development*, 9, 6, June, 1981, pp. 515–37.

11. For example, Patrick Clawson 'The Internationalization of Capital and Capital Accumulation in Iran', in Nore, Petter and Turner, Terisa, (eds) *Oil and Class Struggle*, London, Zed Press, 1980; Barratt Brown, Michael, *The Economics of Imperialism*, London, Penguin, 1974; practically all the works of A. G. Frank, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, etc. Samir Amin, at least those on Egypt: [Hassan Riad,] *L'Egypte nassérienne*, Paris, Minuit, 1964; on the Maghreb, *L'économie du Maghreb*, (2 vols), Paris, Minuit, 1966; *The Arab Economy Today*, Zed Press, 1982; *La Syrie et l'Irak*, Paris, Minuit, 1982. This concrete question of inequality was discussed in chapter 3 [of the original French text omitted here; see note 4, chapter 1 above].

12. Emmanuel, Arghiri, *Appropriate or Underdeveloped Technology?*, Chichester, Wiley, 1982.

13. Brewer, Anthony, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. Brewer devotes a chapter to our theories. Beside the criticisms to which we reply here, it should be noted that he writes on p. 239: 'Amin's treatment of feudalism is somewhat inconsistent. He describes it as the most developed form of the tribute-paying mode . . . (AWS, p. 140)'. We thought we had advanced the contrary thesis: that European feudalism is a primitive, not more evolved, form of the tribute-paying mode, and that this primitive character, which is a specific combination of the communal modes of the Barbarians and ancient heritage, is its main advantage, the flexibility that opened the way to its capitalist supersession. It is the basic thesis of *Class and Nation*. Brewer bases his exposition not on the essence of the thesis but on an incidental remark, namely that in some situations (of 'decadence') the developed tribute-paying mode in disintegration comes close to the feudal forms. Moreover, the error in our model of accumulation on which Brewer is so insistent does not affect the results, as is shown in the appendix to this chapter.

14. Sadly, this is common. Academic competition sometimes leads authors

whose positive contribution is nil to try to 'make a name' exclusively by criticizing others!

15. The British Marxist historian of Greek antiquity, G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, writes: '. . . many of the Marxist works on ancient history published on the Continent are as foreign to the English reader in their intellectual and literary idiom as in their actual language: they tend to take for granted a whole range of concepts to which most people in the English-speaking world are not accustomed and which they find largely unintelligible. The word "jargon" is often used in this context, if not always by those who have earned the right to use it by refraining from a different jargon of their own.' (*The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, London, Duckworth, and Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1981, p. 23). The judgement seems to me highly applicable to certain of our critics, Sheila Smith in particular.

16. *The Arab Economy Today*, pp. 30–31.

17. See chapter 4 below.

18. A work in Arabic on these lines (Al-Daiyiqah, Hasan, *On Samir Amin and the Methodological Problems of Marxist Historians*, Beirut, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1981) has been produced by the revolutionary Islamic fundamentalist current. Our critique too has been published in Arabic (*The Crisis of the Arab Society*). See chapter 6 below (a critique of Islamic fundamentalism) and chapter 5 (a critique of the Greens).

4. The Asian and African Vocation of Marxism

Marxism in the various regions of the modern world cannot be discussed on the basis of a single method of interpreting reality. For Marxist reality itself varies from one region to the other. In the developed capitalist countries, it is possible to conceive of the analysis of this reality from the starting-point of the ideologies and practices of the various labour and communist parties claiming to be Marxist, the history of the formation of such ideologies and practices and of their evolution, the extent of the influence of these partisan organizations on the working class (trades unions) and on the country (elections). In the socialist countries where the regimes claim to be Marxist, we must try not only to appreciate the character of the real social relations and their evolution, but also to grasp the – popular or other – real social reactions to the existing system, its ideology and practices. In capitalist Asia and Africa things are more complicated. The parties and organizations claiming to be Marxist are often weak and obscure owing to the severe repression to which they are subjected, and sometimes not 'recognized' by the official hierarchies of communism. The influence of the ideas and organizations on social life cannot be registered on a Western-style thermometer (elections, when there are such, do not mean much). As these are largely rural societies with a low level of industrialization (the number of 'semi-industrialized' countries can be counted on the fingers of one hand), it is not possible to attach the same significance to the criterion of the influence of Marxism on the working class.

Despite certain appearances to the contrary, however, it seems that Marxism here is alive and well. Its relationship with the national liberation movement, the major social factor in Asia and Africa's history of the past century, is significant and at times decisive (see the case of China). The relationship accounts not only for the past (historical implantation) and present, but also for the future. Granted the future is full of uncertainty, but it is full of objective potential as well. This is perhaps the fundamental distinction between Marxism in Asia and Africa and 'Western Marxism'. Doubtless these prospects of possible expansion will seem 'heresy' to many.

The danger here is of some kind of 'fundamentalist' approach in the interpretation of what Marxism is. The Marxist fundamentalism in question might take various forms nowadays according to the different schools of thought: the Moscow, Beijing or Trotskyist, etc. variety, and the diversely

described 'deviations': revisionist, or peasant nationalist or petty bourgeois, etc. One and all will look to the revered ancestor – Marx, and even Lenin, who is rarely cast aside – for scriptures to justify their own fundamentalism. We shall try to avoid this reef and treat Marxism as a social phenomenon in constant evolution and change. We shall not seek out the 'true Marxism' in order to classify the 'existing Marxisms' according to their distance from the truth. We shall merely attempt to grasp how the ideas generally attributed to Marxism have fared in Asia and Africa, what forces they inspire, to what extent and in what direction they lead the current evolution of the societies. It is not a question of writing a history of the Marxist parties in the region, but of considering the problems with which Marxism is confronted: underlying problems of the linkage between national liberation and socialist revolution, and of socialist construction in the backward countries, conjunctural problems arising from the international situation – Sino-Soviet conflict, superpower conflict: the world crisis and 'North–South' conflicts.

The revolutionary vocation of the working class

The revolutionary vocation of the working class is certainly the essential starting point of Marxism. Marx himself defined the substance of his contribution in these terms: not discovery of social classes, which were known before him, but the demonstration that class struggle in the (capitalist) modern era must lead to the abolition of classes (communism). This presupposes recognition of: a) the essential character of the capital–labour relationship as the determinant social relationship of modern society; b) the expansionist character of this relationship that inexorably extends the scope of its domination on a world scale; c) the impossibility of reconciling the two – bourgeois and proletarian – poles and the illusory and transient character of the compromise between them; d) the necessary and increasing consciousness, among proletarians, of eventual communism; and e) the worldwide expansion of this consciousness – the objective basis of the proclamation 'Working men of all countries unite!' Marx's optimistic belief does not imply a 'religious' certitude of eventual communism. If ever the conditions listed here were to fail, capitalism would lead humankind to self-destruction: the choice is 'communism or barbarism'.

Historical materialism does not entail its reduction to a somewhat crude, linear and mechanistic 'economism', nor its reduction to perception of a single social reality, of class, and the concomitant negation of any other social reality.

The first of these reductions is of very long standing and almost contemporary with Marx's writings. It comes within the tradition of radical bourgeois philosophy, and along with the philosophy of the Enlightenment, likens society to nature and the laws of society to the objective character of the laws of nature. Economic 'constraints' would then operate like natural constraints. From Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* to Soviet '*diamat*' by way of Kautsky's economism, this long tradition leads inexorably to reformism – as

Eduard Bernstein understood – since socialism comes within the context of inevitability, and may become the unwitting destination.

In the final resort, therefore, the condition of consciousness mentioned above loses its particular significance: either it is no longer really necessary, or – coming to the same thing – it develops inexorably. On this outlook too, socialism is impossible until capitalism has done its job: of developing the forces of production and proletarianizing the society.

The second reduction is also of long standing and constitutes a deep trend within the Marxist system. Expansion of the capitalist relationship on a world scale gradually drives out any other social reality: nations, religious and cultural communities, ethnic and tribal groupings, castes and states (stande) lose their reality, to be replaced by a single social opposition, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

But the history of worldwide expansion of capitalism was precisely to provide this challenge to the revolutionary vocation of the working class, as original Marxism had formulated it. Capitalism, far from homogenizing societies and reducing every one of them to the simple dichotomy of bourgeois–proletarian formations, was to fan out on the basis of an unequal international division of labour and reproduce the heterogeneity and hierarchy of nations. Lenin, conscious of the complicity of the socialist parties of the Second International in siding with their bourgeoisies in colonial pillage and great power rivalry, pointed out the political effects of this unforeseen mode of expansion, in *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

It remains to be seen whether this expansion into the reproduction of inequality of social formations of capitalism was really something new. It remains to be seen whether capitalism from its very beginnings and expansion – contemporary with its beginnings – had not always been just that: a world system founded on the asymmetrical positions of central regions and of regions integrated in order to be peripheralized in the system. Was not the mercantilism of the European transition – from the 16th to the 18th century – just that? The brief interim of an industrial and free trade Britain – the half-century from 1820 to 1870 – when new English-style European national centres were established – or gathered momentum – might foster the illusion of this honogenizing power of the extension of the capitalist social relationship. But this was precisely the half-century when Marx was working.[1]

Whatever the interpretation of the past, the Leninist proclamation of a new 'imperialist' era was not going to obliterate the designated political effects. Reformism and the accompanying pro-imperialist attitude were not to be eradicated from working-class consciousness in the metropolises. Quite the reverse, little by little the new parties of the Third International would surrender on the ground of practice – and strategy – to the ponderous weight of the predominant social realities.

Lenin had been daring: the transition to socialism was no longer envisaged as the result of a series of 'socialist revolutions' in the metropolitan centres but as a series of 'breaks in the weakest links' in the dominated and backward peripheries. This new way of interpreting historical necessity and aligning

revolutionary action raised a host of questions: 1) What role can the peasant majorities in the dominated peripheries play? 2) How can the 'working class', numerically weak (to say the least), lead this kind of revolution and guide it? 3) How can the aspirations of the emerging new bourgeoisies in these peripheries be combated effectively? And finally, 4) can the national reality – revolt of the oppressed nations – be integrated into the revolutionary schema?[2]

Doubtless these were not entirely new issues: peasants were a problem to socialists throughout 19th century Europe, in France as in Germany, in Italy, in central and eastern Europe, in the Balkans; the existence of oppressed nations intervened in the political reality of even the most advanced countries (the Irish question), and *a fortiori* in the 'captive populations' (the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman Empires). But the tendency was to play down these issues: the peasants – reservoirs of the anti-worker bourgeois hegemony – were doomed to extinction, the bourgeois revolution and capitalist development would liberate the nations or resolve the problems through assimilation.

With Lenin these old issues took on a new dimension. First they were no longer 'European' issues: the peasants and oppressed nations in question were now those of Asia and Africa – the colonies and semi-colonies. Then it was not a matter of expecting – within the limits of foreseeable action – the 'extinction' of the peasants. Finally, it was no longer realistic to expect the 'bourgeois revolution'.

Leninism – with the idea that the socialist transition would begin with Asia and Africa, with the idea that the working classes of the West were 'corrupted' for some time to come – contained the seeds of a vision whereby Marxism would become a real force for the transformation of society in Asia and Africa, while it would lose this – definitive – role in Europe and North America.

But the issues raised by this transference are far from being resolved, in theory and practice. The theory of the revolutionary vocation of the working class must be looked at again: Has the vocation been lost at the centre of the system? Has it been gained in its peripheries? How is it potentially articulated with the vocations of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie? The evidently continuing debate on the expansion of capitalism remains an underlying factor. What 'capitalism' developed in what became known after the Second World War as the Third World? Was it a capitalism similar in its political effects to capitalism everywhere, with the tasks of 'national liberation' accomplished by the acquisition of 'independence'? Is the Leninist thesis being superseded by the deepening of world capitalism, which would take us back to the original Marxist thesis on the revolutionary vocation of the proletariat in general? Or is it rather that the thesis is still on the agenda, in all its complexity but ceaselessly renewed by the evolution of the very forms of the world capitalist system, constantly changing but constantly 'unequal'? But if Marxism thus becomes worldwide, and ceases to be European, then a whole new series of questions arises. For Marxism, of course, cannot fail to bear within it the marks of the society in which it is born: a society not only bourgeois but also European, emerging from its particular history, on the foundation of feudalism (and must it be admitted: Christianity?). The debate on these issues is many-sided.

Undoubtedly it has its basis in the forms of economic organization of capitalist exploitation on a world scale. But it has further roots: the 'non-European' pre-capitalist modes of exploitation, the 'non-European' cultures (and great religions). Issues, likewise, not entirely new: from the Marx of the *Grundrisse* to debates on the 'Asiatic mode of production', Marxism has not overlooked this kind of problem.

These questions arise anew – or rather have never ceased to be asked – and acquire unsuspected dimensions, when the stirring peoples have been shaped by a history of Confucianism, Hinduism or Islam. Historical materialism, when it touches Asia and Africa, cannot neglect these issues seemingly on the distant fringes.

Obviously this is not a matter of 'theoretical' considerations – in the academic sense. It is a matter of problems arising from practical reality. This is not only one of worldwide expansion of Marxist thought and of the activity of organizations proclaiming it. The practice is also, and above all, the result of two 'real socialist revolutions' (to use Bahro's expression): the Russian and the Chinese.

The Russian revolution has engendered a society that socialists and Marxists cannot ignore. Was its evolution inscribed as a historical necessity, giving the lie to Lenin and justifying 'original Marxism'? Or was it rather that Leninism did not go far enough in its break with original Marxism, and this insufficiency would explain the evolution of the USSR? But if the first socialist revolution took place in a 'semi-Asiatic' country, the second occurred in the heart of Asia. Do the Chinese revolution and the evolution of China it governs confirm the view of the partisans of original Marxism? Is China going to replicate the distortions of the USSR? Or has Maoism gone further than Leninism in the break with original Marxism by heightening a historical evolution marked by the 'transition to socialism from the starting point of the peripheries of the system'? Our interpretation of Leninism – and of the Maoism that has deepened it – is that the working class has lost its revolutionary vocation in the centres of the world system, while a revolutionary situation – potentially opening the way to the socialist transition – has been created at its periphery.

Facts seem to confirm the accuracy of the first half of this assertion. Socialism – in Marx's sense – is not on the agenda in the developed capitalist countries.

The working class here has renounced its own plan for society. At least, if by that is understood a society founded on social appropriation (not reducible to state appropriation), on elimination of commodity fetishism and commodity alienation, on eradication of the division of labour and the great oppositions (manual labour/intellectual labour, conceptual roles/executive roles, governors/governed). A utopian dream of communism that Marxism adopted as its own or a genuine possibility? Marxism was after all defined by this objective. A 'capitalism without capitalists', an 'advanced social-democracy' are not Marx's plans for society. But in the advanced West the working class aspires at best to the latter plans. Is this 'philosophy's fault', namely the economistic reduction noted above, re-establishing the view of the philosophy of the Enlightenment

and taking the place of a Marxism become a radical bourgeois philosophy? Or does this reduction itself have its foundations in the dominant position in the world system enjoyed by the societies in question, positions that call for reconciliation of antagonistic class interests? A third explanation of this stubborn fact might be the retreat of political consciousness that the very success of the Russian and Chinese revolutions has entailed. The fatal distortions that these revolutions have undergone have in turn temporarily erased the socialist consciousness of the advanced working classes. But can the Russian and Chinese revolutions be erased from reality?

The second half of the thesis is even more problematic: has the working class a revolutionary vocation at the periphery that it no longer has at the centre? Does China's experience show that? Is the experience still valid for the Asia and Africa of today or has it already perished?

The Chinese revolution, even more than the Russian revolution, indicates that the situation at the periphery of the world system is explosive and potentially revolutionary, as it has not seemed to be in the West for a century. But is it a 'socialist revolutionary' situation governed by a socialist revolutionary vocation of the working class? The development of capitalism in Asia and Africa reveals particular characteristics that are not a simple replication with a time-lag on development of the West. The industry installed here, in the era of monopoly domination, is modern from the start: it requires capital intensive technology, creates few jobs, and certainly not kinds of employment analogous to those of 19th century European industry. From the start the working class comprises unskilled workers, attached to high output production lines, and not semi-skilled artisans. The class is small in number, recruited from a great mass of poor peasants driven from their land by rural capitalist development and piled into the shanty-towns of the contemporary Third World. The high level of productivity to which it is tied sometimes enables capital to offer certain strata of workers a standard of living that, while abject in comparison with the real wages of equivalent workers at the centre, seems locally to provide significant advantages (especially relative security of employment). Here, the formation of the working class is still quantitatively and qualitatively backward in comparison with that of other classes also engendered by modern capitalist development. These more rapidly developing classes are on the one hand the 'petty bourgeoisies' (technicians, officials, etc.) and 'rural bourgeoisies' (kulaks), and on the other the non-proletarianized impoverished masses (poor peasants, the unemployed of the shanty-towns, etc.) By contrast the local bourgeoisie, like the working class, is inhibited in its development by the domination of monopolies on a world scale.

This peculiar context of contemporary Asia and Africa creates a really explosive situation. The contradiction typifying this situation is all too clear: on the one hand the working class can develop a proper socialist consciousness only by creating its own autonomous class organization and taking its anti-capitalist struggle to its limit, but on the other hand the revolution can triumph only if the working class fights alone. Will it dilute itself in a broad alliance with the peasantry and even the bourgeoisie? Can it, within this necessary broad

anti-imperialist alliance, develop its own communist plan and 'lead' what is called the front? Leninism and its Maoist extension argue that this is possible, and that it is even the appropriate way to world socialist transition in our era. Hence the old slogan 'Working men of all countries unite!' has been replaced by a slogan 'Working men of all countries, oppressed peoples, unite!'

The worldwide expansion of Marxism, the shift of its active centre of gravity from the non-revolutionary developed West to the potentially revolutionary Asia and Africa, are faintly visible behind this theory of the socialist vocation of the working class on a contemporary world scale. It remains to be seen how Maoism has responded in theory and practice to these problems posed by Leninism.

The relevance of Maoism

Maoism was not born at a stroke in Mao's head. Action by Mao and by the Chinese Communist Party was from the start, in the 1920s, within a Leninist line. It was first a matter of overthrowing capitalist power in a backward country. Then from 1950 on it was a matter of building socialism in these circumstances.[3]

Overthrowing capitalist power entailed the Communist Party's becoming both the spearhead of the anti-capitalist forces and a rallying point for a broad anti-feudal and anti-imperialist national alliance. For this it was necessary for the Party to steer between two reefs: that of isolation and 'worker' sectarianism, to which Trotskyism was leading, and that of fusion in a front that would in the last analysis have been dominated by the bourgeois forces of the Kuomintang, to which Moscow's diplomacy was enticing. Mao and the CCP avoided these reefs almost without 'theoretical' declarations. With hindsight it can be seen that success was due to observance of the following 'principles': a) the creation of an autonomous organization claiming to be Marxist, predicated on a worker and radical intellectual base supporting Marxism; b) evacuation of the towns, the centres of pro-imperialist bourgeois power, and withdrawal to the countryside; c) conduct of an unrelenting class struggle in the countryside, founded on the aspirations of the poor and landless peasants and isolating the land owners; d) adoption for protection of this struggle of the organizational form of a guerrilla army; e) parallel conduct of a flexible diplomacy aimed at recruiting the broadest national backing – intellectuals, petty bourgeoisie and even bourgeoisie – against the principal enemy, imperialism (Japanese in this instance) and its allies.

The long struggles waged under these circumstances established a favourable basis for the future, after the seizure of power. They gave the Communist Party a broad social base, principally peasant and worker. The CCP that emerged from this struggle had a decisive advantage over its counterparts in the International: it was genuinely supported by 90 per cent of the people, as was not the case for the Bolshevik party in 1917 (the Socialist Revolutionaries – Essaires – were dominant in the countryside then) or even less so for the

European workers' parties of the Second and Third International.

What was the character of this party: 'worker' or 'peasant'? The argument on this point is not yet decided. Mao and the authorities in Beijing have never failed to describe it as worker, in spite of the numerical predominance of the peasant element (poor peasants at that). Some would see it as a non-worker party and find this the explanation of China's later 'deviations'. But were not these 'deviations', if they are to be regarded as such, also perpetrated by the Bolshevik party which did not have a peasant base? Others, on the contrary, would like to go further than 'official Maoism': they want to acknowledge in this experience evidence of the revolutionary character of the peasantry, which had erroneously been denied by Marxism. Fanon went so far as this, rather as Marcuse did for the West, by substituting vagabonds for the 'integrated' workers who had lost their revolutionary vocation. Maoism has always rejected this point of view.

After the overthrow of capitalist power, the task was to build socialism in a backward country, that is to develop the forces of production without recreating capitalist social relations and by developing on the contrary new socialist social relations. This is not to say that Maoism managed to solve the problem, but it is relevant to see how it was posed, in theory and practice, and how in so doing it deepened and superseded Leninism and the Soviet experience, and what practical and theoretical limits it encountered.

Observation of the development of China between 1950 and 1980 illustrates the nature of the differences between this and the development of the Soviet Union. The Chinese model, inspired by directives from Mao in the 'ten great relationships' of 1956, offers the following essential characteristics:

a) The target of equality between the average real rural income and the average real wage of urban workers and staff (the peasants suffer no unremunerated exaction of surplus in kind or in forced labour); this equality is not the result of spontaneous economic laws but of a global political decision that gives the worker and peasant alliance its meaning.

b) Within each category, rural and urban, rewards of labour are to be distributed relatively equally around the average. These two principles evidently do not entail a tendency to spontaneous reabsorption of inequalities. On the contrary regional inequalities (and hence that of marketed agricultural surplus) and inequalities within a branch where there are units of unequal productivity (and hence of profit as a result of fixing wages and prices at the national level) have a tendency to increase. This raises a problem of articulation between the plan and the market capable of redistributing the unequal means of accumulation.

Despite these inequalities, the general proportions have remained within the principal objective of the strategy during the 30 year history of socialist China. But the essential means for implementing this policy has remained bureaucratic centralized planning.

This model differs fundamentally from that of the USSR. The difference lies not in the means (a centralized plan and administrative management or flexible plan and recourse to the market), but in the content (a worker and peasant

alliance and state power representing it or absence of this alliance, that is absence or construction of a state bourgeoisie). If the debate on 'revisionism' is still confused it is because these distinctions have not been drawn and an analysis of their origin has not been carried through to the end.

It is essential to know that, from the 1930s, the Soviet model was constructed by massive syphoning of surplus by the state from the countryside.[4] Whereas collectivization in China was achieved very rapidly after the agrarian reform, and the transition from inferior forms of the co-operative to its superior forms (achieved essentially by 1956) gained massive support from the peasantry, it was not at all the same thing for collectivization as it was carried out in the USSR between 1930 and 1935. The latter, under compulsion, put a *de facto* end to the worker and peasant alliance that had constituted the basis of socialist state power from 1917 to 1930. The roots of 'revisionism' date back to this break in the worker and peasant alliance. Forced collectivization led to the development of a police apparatus that rapidly acquired great autonomy *vis-à-vis* the society and even the Party. Little by little this apparatus became the point of crystallization of a new class and of transformation of the state. The state, confirmed as oppressor of the peasants, was gradually oriented towards a policy of urban wages and income differentials. Theoretical insufficiencies dating back to Leninism (which had not broken with the economistic positivism of the Second International and therefore regarded technology as 'neutral') doubtless contributed to this orientation. But above all, the state, strengthened in its oppressive role in regard to the peasants, found itself in a position to break the possible resistance of the working class. It dictated the policy of acute wage differentials in industry reflecting the inevitable consequences of aspiring to reconstitute a dominant class described, for want of a better term, as 'state bourgeoisie'. This is what made the state the oppressor of the people.

Doubtless the reasons for this major difference between the two models are to be found in the history of the two communist parties. The Bolshevik party, despite its revolutionary option and its break with the opportunism of the Second International, remained influenced by the history of the labour movement of the West and the latter's distrust of the peasants, as a reservoir of the bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik party, with real influence in the Russian working class, had no rural presence, as the rural areas were dominated almost entirely by the Socialist Revolutionaries. The Chinese party, with a strong rural presence from 1930 up to the victory of 1949, had therefore an entirely different spontaneous attitude to the peasants.

Why is this 'model' not spelled out in the 'theoretical texts'? The only explanation we can find is that the model emerged 'spontaneously' from the class content of the system, without the CCP's engaging in polemic against the Soviet model in this regard. The ambivalent relationship to the Third International and to Stalinism, the *de facto* autonomy of the CCP, its apparent 'pragmatism' and refusal to follow or to break with Moscow, are results of this history. The subsequent inadequacies of the Maoist critique of revisionism are also part of the price paid later. Even after the 1960s split the critique of

revisionism in China never reached this conclusion, which calls in question the judgement to be made of the whole Stalinist period from 1930 on. It is true that all the currents that appeared within Bolshevism, and in particular Trotskyism, shared with Stalin the illusion that industrialization could be speeded up by massive administrative exaction from the peasantry. Bukharin is perhaps an exception to this unanimity. On the other hand and principally, it is true that until about 1960 the USSR, despite its decline, remained encircled and threatened. In these circumstances, it seems to us that support for the 'besieged fortress' delayed the coming to consciousness of the regime's loss of standing among the communists of the whole world.

The inadequacy of the critique on this fundamental point explains that if in general the principal of equal exchange was the backbone of Chinese strategy during thirty years, the temptation to violate the principle was always there and expressed in the language of the right ('payment according to productivity') and of the left ('equalization by administrative force').

The differences marking these two models help explain the character of the 'economic laws'. The latter are not 'ineluctable', in the sense of acting like the constraints of nature. They do exist but they are specific to each system and this in turn is the result of the configuration of class alliances and conflicts. A 'law of value' can therefore be found in each of the systems, socialist and statist, just as it can be found in the capitalist system. In so far as this law merely presupposes the existence of the division of labour, it is evident: products must be exchanged and accounted for, but according to what relationship?

In the socialist model the law of value operates within the framework of the national state, whereas in the capitalist system it operates on a world scale. The reason is simply that the division of labour governing capitalist accumulation is worldwide, whereas in the nature of things, in the absence of the impossible and mythical 'world revolution', socialism necessarily starts out as a national construction, guided by the political will to give preference to the national social division of labour and to subject external relations to the imperatives of this construction.

The statist model is also national, as the Soviet Union bears witness. The same is true of the entire East, even if this is less apparent. But the law of value operates on the basis of class social relations, founded on the appropriation of a surplus to the benefit of 'new middle classes', the objective support to state power. In this sense it offers an analogy to the capitalist law of value where the value operating on the basis of class relations appears in its form of transformation by the appropriation of profit and dividends.

The law of value governing the societies of peripheral capitalism is that operating on the global scale of world capitalism. It means that the amount of socially necessary labour is determined by the productivities of labour in the most advanced regions of the system. Conversely, in the socialist transition, the centralized surplus is allocated regardless of the sectors of origin, and the exchange relations between the various sectors of production are fixed in accordance with the amounts of socially necessary labour determined in the national framework. This means that one hour of average social labour in the

abstract, in national agriculture and industry, are equated whatever the relative prices of the output of these hours of labour in the developed capitalist centres. 'Delinking' of the system of socialist transition in respect of the world capitalist system is situated at this level. It is not a matter of material delinking, 'absolute autarky', but rather a neutralization of the effects of external exchange on internal choices. External exchange, doubtless limited in this situation, is subjected to the logic of national and socialist internal development, and not the reverse.

It is therefore the law of value on the basis of socialist relations, and not its negation, that governs both average equality of real incomes for a year's labour of peasant and worker, and a narrow spread of wages. The question therefore is not 'law of value' (whose existence would show the 'statist', or revisionist, character of the society) or 'negation of the law of value' (equivalent to the just path of socialism).[5] The real question is: law of value on the basis of what social relationship? The dual principle of internal abolition of the exploitative classes and delinking in relation to the world system, determines the necessary development of the forces of production in the perspective of transition to socialism. This dual principle does not exclude value; it presupposes it but operating on its own bases.

The coexistence of the requirement for development of the forces of production and the political will to direct the development of the transition towards the abolition of class raises problems of economic management. There are two sets of approach to these real problems, which lead either to a preference for centralized administrative management, or to a preference for decentralized economic management of production units. But the opposition of these two modes of management is not identical to the opposition between 'negation of the law of value' and 'resort to the law of value'.

Moreover, administrative management is no guarantee of the socialist path: is not Soviet statism built on the basis of administrative management? But nor is negation of administrative management any guarantee of effective protection against statism: is not the Yugoslav statist model developed on the basis of autonomous management of firms? Autonomous management might be preferable (it is certainly our preference), since at the political level it reduces the danger – in case of a drift to statism – of despotic and irreversible statism, and allows greater flexibility to the political system. This observation tends to show that the essential factor is the political level and that in this sense it really is 'politics at the posts of command'.

If socialism – understood as a transition to communism – requires the implementation of a 'law of value', then the existence of 'economic laws of socialism', and a 'political economy of socialism', must be acknowledged. However, these laws and this political economy have a different status from the one they have in capitalism. For the character and mode of operation of capitalism's economic laws are inseparable from the particular infrastructure–superstructure relationship appropriate to this mode of production.

In capitalism, the obscurity of relations of exploitation resulting from the generalization of the commodity form, including labour power, is the ultimate

reason why economic laws appear here to operate from 'outside', like 'laws of nature', determining both the fundamentally economistic character of social alienation and the apparent separation of politics and economics. By contrast, socialism is transparent or at least should tend to be. Society must therefore control the commodity relations that govern it. It is the very meaning of 'politics at the posts of command'. The plan rests on a relationship between wages and cereals costs that makes clear the equation of value of a year's labour by a peasant and a worker. And this relation of equality must be grasped with political lucidity by the workers. Wage hierarchies must also be determined democratically, accepted for political reasons without going into ideological obscuration (of 'varying productivities'). The debates on the issue of 'socialism's economic laws' have generally failed to clarify this point, since they have not made clear the quantitative proportions governing the commodity relations of socialism and distinguishing them from those of capitalism.

Too often, commodity relations have been treated as the same as capitalist commodity relations, and likewise socialism and the abolition of commodity relations. This was Rosa Luxemburg's position, and it was Lenin's it would seem (the return to 'commodity relations' is a 'concession'), then Stalin's. Every time economic laws were spoken of, the law of value, commodity relations, it was to the effect that this 'concession' to capitalism would be only 'temporary'. In fact 'return to the law of value' has often been a concomitant, if not of the return to capitalism, at least of stabilization of the statist system of exploitation. Concessions made to the 'free market', to 'small holders', to 'economic calculation' and to 'profit' in this or that situation, from the USSR to Eastern Europe, Vietnam and Cuba, and even China, concessions that always aggravate inequality, are of this negative kind of 'return' to a part-capitalist, part-statist law of value.

The real question then is: by what means to make transparent the (equal) commodity relations of socialism? There are two theses on this issue: by self-management, or by politics in the posts of command:

Self-management is a complex social plan which certainly has an essentially democratic aspect – moreover it is the labour movement in its revolutionary spontaneity that has produced it through workers' councils or soviets. But it splits the working class into competing collectives. Its real function therefore is a tendency to reduce the political lucidity of the options as soon as the revolutionary phase, where it indicates the seizure of the means of labour by the workers against the bosses, is over. Self-management can only be partial and should not exclude planning but be articulated within it. By default it generates a new form of economistic alienation that reproduces the splitting of the working class, as the Yugoslav experience shows.[6]

'Politics in the posts of command' does not mean ideological arbitrariness, but on the contrary clear-sighted management of equal commodity relations between collectives that are both self-managed and structurally integrated into the social fabric. This entails a continual progression of political and social democracy. Continuous democratic progress or stagnation and regression in the real power of workers raises the inevitable issue of democracy at state level.

For the state is an absolute requirement, not for 'external' or transient reasons, but because it is the sole means of articulating the real powers of collectives on the basis of an overall social plan.

Evidently the issue of the state's democracy cannot be regulated by its own proclamation that it ('democratically') 'represents' the 'masses'. Nor can it be reduced to the issue of 'respect for legality', which is a paternalist legitimation of statist exploitation. This question is in reality the fundamental issue in socialism.

The preceding exposition enables us to situate the nature of what is at stake in these struggles during the long transition to abolition of class. These struggles are articulated around: a) the law of value (what law of value: statist, capitalist or socialist?); b) management of the economy (bureaucratic or genuinely controlled by workers?); and c) organization of political life (socialist democracy or statist police despotism?)

On their outcome depends the future of socialism.

From this point of view these fundamental problems of the transition have so far been handled fairly correctly during China's evolution. Obviously not every orientation and political initiative has been correct at all times, but in the narrower sense that the mistakes have never led to an irreversible situation. In this sense Maoism represents an advance on Leninism. It remains to be seen if the 'new course' will follow this logic of continuity, or on the contrary initiate a break with it. The reforms envisaged may in our opinion provide a deepening of socialist development and thereby provoke new negative aspects that could in principle be corrected. This does not hide the fact that China now stands at a crossroads. Will it evolve into a revisionist model on the lines of that of the USSR or towards a model of the Yugoslav type, or will it succeed in going further along the path that Mao's epoch had merely embarked upon?

The inadequacies of the Maoist critique of revisionism are expressed in a contradiction between the appeal to mass initiative and decentralization, and the maintenance of the principle of administrative management of the economy. The abstract negation of the law of value is in fact the origin of the limitations to this consciousness. It has led to impasse and the maintenance, against all sides, of an inevitably bureaucratic administrative management.

It might therefore be agreed that Maoism rests on the following four principles: 1) equality of town and countryside, foundation of the worker and peasant alliance, which precludes any forced exaction of surplus and dictates 'taking agriculture as the base'; 2) a narrow spread of wages reflecting the unequal quality of labour (measured by the social costs of training) but excluding any differential beyond that; 3) the option for autonomous national development, not necessarily autarkic, but delinked from the world system in the sense that external relations are entirely subjected to the requirements of the logic of internal development; and 4) the option for management of the economy (technology, labour organization and discipline, etc.) and the society by the workers, and not imposed from above by 'cadres' in the name of supposed 'efficiency' and 'science'.

These principles define a transitional society and not a society that has

already reached the stage of definitive abolition of class. First, since development of the forces of production remains a legitimate and essential concern: abundance is the precondition for a distribution determined by the principle 'to each according to his needs'. Then, since such progress of the forces of production, on the basis of social relations within the communist perspective, is secured in a national framework delinked from the world system. This constraint of imperialism, arising from unequal development within the capitalist system, on the struggles and the socialist transition is undeniable. The transition is also characterized by: a) persistence of two popular but not uncontradictory hegemonic classes ('within the people'); b) persistence of categories whose skills and hence responsibilities are unequal; and c) necessity of a state, not only in the nature of things belonging to the world system of states, but also necessary to articulate the popular hegemonic alliance and to organize development of the forces of production. The state, as the obligatory third partner in the transition to socialism, is then the locus of struggles between the 'socialist path' and the 'capitalist path' (not the right expression), that is the path of constituting a new mode of exploitation ('revisionism'). Since the state is the locus of these struggles, the option for social management by the masses (in contrast to a management by 'cadres') remains imperfect, contradictory, and under permanent threat.

To sum up, it might be said that the Maoist deepening of Leninism remains a relevant response to the major problems of our times. This deepening is a reminder that if the socialist transition must be pursued from the starting point of national and popular revolutions at the peripheries of the world system, it demands a broad popular alliance (and implementation of the law of value on this basis) and 'delinking' (in the sense of delinking from the world capitalist law of value). It is also a reminder that the revisionist option traps us in impasse and does not offer a stable and progressive solution to the problems posed. But Maoism has its limits, apparent today: the question of strengthening the mass political democracy and, closely linked to this, the question of effective mass economic management.

Socialist transition or capitalist expansion?

Worldwide expansion of capitalism, far from gradually homogenizing the societies of the earth, has from the outset been founded upon a centres/peripheries dichotomy. The imperialist form of this expansion has, since the end of the 19th century, widened this dichotomy at the same time as it removed the further possibility of the accession of new nations to the status of 'centres'. This is the essential factor explaining why the transition to socialism has not been initiated by the path of socialist revolutions in the developed capitalist countries, or by a 'world revolution', but by breaks occurring at the peripheries of the system (the 'weakest links') and leading to a new era. This is ambivalent in its class character and perspective. The issue of the contradictory character of the national liberation movement of the populations at the

periphery and the contradictory character of the socialist transition that this struggle may open in the best case is therefore at the centre of the debate in actual contemporary Marxism; that is, an appreciation of Marxism as a force for changing the world (as opposed to Marxism as a 'school of thought'). At the same time, the character and prospects for capitalist development in the rest of the capitalist periphery of Asia and Africa is at the centre of this debate.[7]

There are even some who believe that the Russian and Chinese revolutions are in these circumstances only deviant forms of the bourgeois revolution, opening not a transition to the abolition of class but an era of capitalist development. Logically, for them, the development of capitalism is also going on elsewhere, in Asia and Africa, without 'revolutions' of the same kind, but through evolution in the emergence of national bourgeoisies, which will gradually stamp out the centre/periphery dichotomy.

In this perspective of the bourgeoisie remaining a rising class on a world scale, neither socialist revolution nor Marxism as the ideology of the abolition of class is on the agenda. In such circumstances Marxism is destined to be hijacked and become the ideology of class power of a bourgeois kind.

Our analysis of the dead-end represented by the peripheral capitalist development under way and 'revisionism', and starting from the revolutionary vocation of the peoples of Asia and Africa and the prospects for Marxism in these regions, is directed against those theses.

The 1945–70 period after the Second World War was marked by tremendous development of capitalism on a world scale. In the framework of an international division of labour renewed on the basis of the accession of Asian and African countries to independence – the major success of the national liberation movements in these countries – a new phase of industrialization of the South was opened, crystallizing the constitution or reconstitution of new partner nation-states in the world system. Was this 'emergence of the Third World' within the line of gradual development of capitalism on a world scale, progressively annulling the problems of the centres/peripheries dichotomy? The profound crisis affecting the world system since the 1970s makes one venture to doubt. Explosions – that may be revolutionary – are possible. In these circumstances the principal force in the transformation of the world in the direction of socialism is likely to continue to manifest itself through the national liberation struggles of the societies of peripheral capitalism. For social classes are never, *per se*, 'revolutionary' or the reverse; a class becomes objectively revolutionary when it stands to gain nothing from reforms or adjustments that conform to the logic of the particular model of capital accumulation within which it is inserted. But the imperialist system (and hence it deserves the name) is such that the classes that might be objectively revolutionary are a minority at the centre and a majority at the periphery of the system, since the accumulation under way, on the basis of an unequal international division of labour, permits at the centre a growth of all incomes in keeping with that of productivity, while at the periphery it is founded on stagnation (or even regression) in incomes for the people (poor peasants and workers).

From this situation flows the special character of the transition to socialism on a world scale, a character unforeseen in Marx's time. At the centre, ideological maturity, the product of a long history of bourgeois and labour movements, might appear in some ways in advance of what it is at the periphery, where the tasks of national liberation and the peasant and democratic national revolution may distort the socialist aims. And there is the following paradox: those who know what has to be done cannot act, whereas those who act are not always fully aware of the consequences of their action. We have called this model of transition of one society to the other the 'model of decadence'.[8]

This thesis is under challenge. It is argued that the phase of national liberation is complete, in other words the system has ceased to be imperialist in the Leninist sense of the word. The bourgeoisies who have come to power in the Third World have committed their countries to capitalist development. It is true that there are advanced countries and backward countries in this global development. But that is nothing new; there is a continuum from the poorest to the rich; there is no longer (or less and less so) a qualitative centre/periphery difference. So with the emergence of semi-industrialized countries, the centre of gravity of capitalism may be shifting towards the South and the East. This development, it should be understood, is worldwide and not made up of autarkic national segments. The world character is also true of the most developed countries – where no branch of production is strictly national any longer, but linked by interdependence to production external to the nation – just as for the less developed countries. All are 'interdependent', even if, evidently, some are more fragile and more exposed, in this generalized interdependence. The 'dependency theory' (if it deserves the name of theory) is obsolete. Like it or not, interdependence raises the issue of socialism again, in terms of world, and no longer national, transformation. Furthermore any attempt to 'withdraw' from the system of interdependence entails such a regression of the forces of production that it is utterly doomed to failure.

This critique seems to account well for numerous phenomena of the current system. Moreover it invites one – and rightly so – to place the state and its class content at the centre of the analysis. The thesis is, that the states of the Third World are national bourgeois and not comprador bourgeois, as was the case in the period of the triumph of imperialism. These national bourgeoisies implement their plan for construction of a capitalist national economy albeit integrated in the world system. For this purpose they seek – and to varying but significant degree manage – to control the national bases of development, namely: 1) the labour market, by establishing conditions for proletarianization, notably in the form of disintegration of the former agrarian societies and the resulting rural exodus, by control of the proletarianized labour force (urban repression, banning of unions, 'one-party' systems, etc); 2) access to and control of natural resources by nationalization; 3) access to the market by control of the internal market and concomitantly inroads into external markets; 4) access to and control of financial resources by the establishment of national monetary and financial systems; and finally, 5) gradual access to

technology, at least in the branches industrialized at this stage. If this is the case then the new bourgeoisie of the countries of the South is both in conflict and in co-operation with the developed capitalist powers. Just as there are inter-imperialist conflicts, why should the rising bourgeoisies of the South not be in conflict with imperialism?

The thesis does not preclude there also being Third World states of the comprador bourgeoisie, that is, which purely and simply accept trans-nationalization and merely try to integrate according to their 'comparative advantage'; which accept specialization in agricultural and mining exports and/or export industries founded on cheap manpower. The comprador state subordinates its own economic policy, if it has one, to the exigencies of transnationalization. In practice it polices the manpower to the benefit of the monopolies who in the logic of things control the economy. At best the comprador state wins some concessions, sometimes purely formal (such as ownership of the mines without technological control or control of markets), and sometimes genuine but insignificant, enabling them for example to develop an agrarian economy to the benefit of the rural bourgeoisie and the state, or a minor import substitution industry.

The thesis also acknowledges that in some countries internal social relations have led to the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie to the benefit of a state fostering the plan of building a socialist society (China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba). Or even that an unstable equilibrium of social forces, where popular and bourgeois classes are in confrontation, has given rise to states some would call 'national democratic' treading the 'non-capitalist path' where the outcome (national capitalism or socialism) is still undecided.

This thesis is meaningful only if the national bourgeois plan is historically possible. It provides an affirmative response to this question by making clear the circumstances that would favour this plan:

a) The national liberation struggle has put an end to the pre-1939 colonialism; the military defeat of the United States (the Korean and Vietnam wars, the unsuccessful intervention in Cuba, recognition of the People's Republic of China) confirms the potency of the Third World states. The boycott by the oil producing export countries (OPEC) in 1973 would have been unthinkable twenty years earlier, witness Mossadegh's failure in Iran.

b) The existence of the 'socialist' countries – the USSR in the first place – strengthens the Third World states. Soviet military support (Egypt in the past, Angola and Ethiopia today, etc.) is a not inconsiderable means of dissuasion. Aid from the East might support national economic construction (though this is highly debatable) and influence it towards socialism (though this is even more debatable).

This whole thesis seems to us on the one hand to overestimate the capacity of the national bourgeoisies of the Third World and on the other to err in its evaluation of the objectives, means and effectiveness of USSR policy.

Doubtless the national liberation struggle and, concomitantly, Soviet support and the inter-imperialist contradictions have changed the situation. The plan of the Third World bourgeoisies is indeed to build a national economy

and integrate in the world system. The plan – the NIEO – is therefore ambivalent. It can be interpreted as merely a plan for delocalization of the multinationals, or as the plan of states that have in fact taken the initiative in its formulation and wish to avoid transnationalization. Certainly the latter is what they want, but can they see it through?

It has been a failure even when it looked like success: the control of natural resources is restricted by the obligation on the Third World to answer the demand of the North (OPEC cannot turn off the oil tap . . .) and by the continuing existence of zones of exploitation of the comprador kind (in Africa in particular); industrial exports of the Third World have penetrated the markets of the North only where the multinationals have taken them under their wing; access to the sea is closed to the Third World; plans for 'delinking' through 'collective autonomy' (intensified South–South relations) remain a dead letter; the financial surpluses are recycled to the benefit of the world system, etc. This failure seems to us neither partial nor conjunctural. It reveals the impossibility of a national bourgeois plan in our times. The conclusion we draw is that the bourgeois national states will not avoid transnationalization, that is their compradorization.[9]

If a typology is drawn up of the states of the Third World and the real prospects for each group, what will the findings be? A first group of countries consists of comprador bourgeoisies. This is the case where the bourgeoisie is historically weak and the forces of production backward. It matters little that some of these countries have a 'statist' form, call themselves 'socialist' or 'Marxist', and depend heavily on the USSR. This form – overtly capitalist or statist – depends on non-decisive local historical conditions. There is a close affinity between the classical agrarian, merchant and petty contracting comprador bourgeoisies and the bureaucratic bourgeoisies, especially in the way in which they are inserted into the world system and in their objective function as intermediaries in extraction of surplus from the peasantry to the benefit of the monopolies, etc. The Soviet alliance here is conjunctural and weak, as experience has so often shown. It is intended to reflect the USSR's own strategic needs and in no way to compensate for the insufficiencies of the local dominant class. A second group consists of states with the effective appearance of national bourgeois states. Some have openly opted for naked capitalism, others have declared themselves more or less socialist. Finally, a third group of countries have in fact achieved more profound social changes and declare themselves Marxist (China, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba), but the issue of their 'national bourgeois' or 'socialist' character remains open to debate.

Most of these states have chosen to integrate with the capitalist international division of labour, two of them (Cuba and Vietnam) within the division of labour of the Soviet bloc, two (China and North Korea) have opted for maximum autonomy. For the countries that do not claim to be building socialism, it remains to be seen whether this choice does not necessarily entail transnationalization. For those who do seek it, whether the choice of integration in the capitalist domain is compatible with their socialist (or supposedly such) perspective, and if integration in the Soviet bloc can be a

substitute to integration in the capitalist division of labour. Finally, for those who have chosen delinking, the question is whether this will permit a socialist development.

Some countries of the first group (Brazil, South Korea, Mexico, among others) are often put forward as success stories. We do not find their prospects brilliant. The downfall of the Shah of Iran is not exceptional: it is a result of the contradiction between the bourgeois plan and the revolt of the popular masses, insurmountable in this case since the bourgeois plan is founded on continual aggravation of the people's plight, as imperialism does not leave sufficient room for manoeuvre. Compradorization is therefore inevitable in the absence of a popular rising. In South Korea the passage from the model of transnationalization to a model of national accumulation has still to be made and the popular movement puts on the agenda a more radical change in society. As for the countries which have opted for a 'moderate socialist path' without a break with the world system, they have all encountered the same limitations and have already failed or are in danger of failing. Nasserism was followed by *infitah* (the open door), that is the inevitable compradorization of 'non-capitalist' development. Here again, as always, the Soviet alliance has not prevented catastrophe.

The thesis we oppose is deficient in its static conception of the national bourgeoisie/comprador bourgeoisie couplet. These concepts were introduced by the Chinese Marxists during the 1930s and at the time in China, as elsewhere in the colonial and semi-colonial world, the comprador bourgeoisie comprised mercantile intermediaries, while the national bourgeoisie aspired to develop an industrial output that was denied it by the prevailing division of labour. There was an ensuing tendency to freeze this conceptualization and to believe that any industrial activity must necessarily constitute a support to a national bourgeoisie. What was forgotten was that the system of international division of labour was itself dynamic, while remaining unequal. Nowadays, in the current system, dependent industrialization of the Third World goes hand in hand with compradorization of the bourgeoisie, in the sense that the latter today fulfils functions similar to those the former comprador bourgeoisie fulfilled in the past: the new industrial bourgeoisie, like the former mercantile bourgeoisie, transfers to the monopolies a large proportion of the surplus extracted through exploitation of local workers.

The global outlook, therefore, is of compradorization of the Third World national bourgeoisie, and its subjection to transnationalization. This process creates the very conditions for a new revolutionary wave in Asia and Africa, where the conditions of the exploited popular masses are not only deplorable, but are worsening day by day, and where the bourgeoisies are weak and incapable of controlling the capitalist transformation under way. These weaknesses of the national bourgeois plan are compounded by difficulties peculiar to the cultural domain. Capitalist modernization means 'Europeanization' as well. In the Afro-Asiatic societies with strong non-European cultures there is great resistance to capitalist deculturation. It can draw together anti-capitalist social forces by providing them with an ideological bond, as the

example of Islam in Iran has shown. In such circumstances the alternative is: either transnationalization accepted by the bourgeoisie, or revolt by the people. This revolt is an initial but still confused break, where the ingredients of disintegration carry the day, but it is a precondition for later recrystallizations: socialist, statist or comprador.

The chances of the new wave going further than the previous one are good: since revisionism is undergoing a crisis, and this crisis creates favourable conditions for the socialist anti-revisionist struggle. Similarly it opens prospects for socialist renewal in the developed West that could change the face of the world. We in no way underestimate the potential progress of socialism in the East and the West. But this entails the elimination of revisionism. In this sense the revolt of the Polish workers is of great significance, despite all the confusion that history has brought to that country.

The resonance this revolt will have in Eastern Europe, and even in the USSR perhaps, will in turn renew the problematic of socialism in the West. Then perhaps will the tragic dilemma be overcome – of liberal bourgeois policies, at best with shades of classic social-democracy, or powers on the lines of those ruling Moscow and Warsaw. Socialism will be relieved of a serious handicap – the burden of the revisionist Western communist parties. How the possible new dynamic of a renewed Western socialism will link up with anti-imperialist liberation, or on the contrary clash with it, it is too early to say.

But clearly this crisis is part of an international situation it is broadly shaping and it cannot be left out of the analysis and the definition of the strategic aims.[10] The thesis must be rejected that interprets these contemporary conflicts in terms of a struggle between the 'socialist camp' and the 'capitalist camp', since the revisionist USSR is not socialist. The thesis must likewise be rejected that these conflicts put 'socialist forces' in direct opposition to 'capitalist forces', since the forces of the left on a world scale have not put abolition of class on the agenda. They are struggling for other immediate objectives: improvement of the conditions of the working classes in the imperialist societies, improvement of the position of the peoples of the periphery in the framework of a renewed world economic system. Hence the front of the stage is held by nations and states, hegemonic alliances expressing their strategies through the actions of the states they lead, and blocs of oppressed classes situating their strategies within the perspective of the immediate objectives indicated above.

The question then arises whether the weaknesses of the Third World are not 'at stake' between the superpowers and, moreover, between the two current 'solutions': capitalist compradorization or 'Sovietization'. Soviet 'aggressiveness' has sometimes seemed to make this a real alternative. But here one must distinguish . . . Certainly the Soviet system has its weaknesses. It may seem incapable of overcoming its crisis and moving on from an extensive accumulation, whose potential is exhausted, to an intensive accumulation, which would require profound political reform that the system could not control and does not envisage. In these circumstances it may seem incapable of using economic means to dominate the international class alliances that this form of imperialist domination entails. Furthermore, it no longer enjoys its

former ideological prestige. It could dominate only its satellites, within its sphere of possible military operation. But despite weaknesses on the economic, social and ideological level, the USSR is, on the military level, the only superpower able to rival the United States and hence have a truly global policy. It is not a priori impossible for the Soviet Union to attempt to overcome the most trying difficulties, for example by pressing Western Europe to its 'aid' by a massive export of technology. Such pressure would be exerted on European supplies of raw materials and energy coming from the Third World. The USSR would count on the weaknesses of the Third World liberation movement – unable at this stage to escape imperialist domination without calling on Soviet support. As it would also count on a certain 'blind wish for detente' in Europe concerned exclusively about its economic competition with the United States and Japan. The invasion of Afghanistan, and the interventions in Southern and East Africa, fit logically into this strategy.

This kind of analysis is not entirely unfounded. But it becomes risky when, at the expense of the actual political conjuncture of the moment, itself volatile, concrete analysis of the tactics of the conflicting forces is replaced with abstract discourse on the 'logic of systems'. Moreover in other texts we have warned against this kind of abstract proposition. In our view 'capitalism does not harbour war as the cloud does a storm', and the Soviet system by nature is no more militaristic and aggressive than peace-mongering. Any society may consider war or peace, according to its belief whether or not it can resolve its contradictions by other means. But one must note that under Reagan the United States opted for a 'general offensive' driving the Soviet Union on to the defensive. In our opinion this counter-attack aimed at re-establishing a declining hegemony includes a consistent attack on the South (its recompradorization). The East–West conflict is artificially revived, to constrain Europe to rally to the Atlantic alliance (which is currently the case) and so reduce the scope of European autonomy, and to justify the global offensive against the Third World.

Other schemas of juggling the globe are also 'theoretically' possible. A few years ago – before Europe's great rallying round the Atlantic alliance – increasingly acute economic contradictions between Europe and the United States combined with the conjuncture of detente suggested the possibility of a Paris–Bonn–Moscow axis (the pipeline affair is evidence of this). This is no longer the conjuncture, but nothing rules out this possibility for the long term.

The profound structural crisis of the Soviet system, however, shows that its solutions are not a real way out of the problems of our world, but rather lead to an impasse. That is why USSR-style revisionism cannot offer a stable solution to Third World problems.

Capitalist expansion and the 'white peril'

Capitalism as a mode of social organization is inseparable from Europeanness, the concrete historical base on which it is founded. For non-European peoples

capitalism first appeared as an expression of European expansion. And this reality is an essential ingredient of a popular and general consciousness whose political effects cannot be ignored. Capitalist expansion has been seen to be particularly destructive. Capitalism is certainly to blame for the worst genocides in history and widespread destruction of tribe. Europeans have therefore appeared to the peoples of Asia and Africa as collectively accessory to the crimes of capitalism. In turn, official history – Western-centred through its European origins – has systematically played down the significance of the destructive side of this expansion in order to boast of its 'civilizing' mission. Even Marx, stressing the liberation of the forces of production, was a victim of this standpoint, although in his old age he reviewed his hasty judgements in favour of Euro-capitalist expansion.

Is any reminder necessary of this 'white peril'? The total genocide of the North American Indians, the destruction of Spanish American Indian cultures, of a population as numerous as that of colonizing Europe, the slave trade that brought to the black continent the heaviest human toll ever known and caused several centuries of regression in the level of material and political development of Africa – these are among its most violent expressions. Settler colonialism in South Africa and in Palestine reproduce the racist model up to our own times. The same threat hung over North Africa, and only Ottoman protection saved it in the first instance from the Spanish before it suffered French settler colonialism, and until recently over Kenya and Zimbabwe. In Siberia, Turkestan and the Caucasus, Russian expansion was heightened after the 1917 revolution and the methods of Russification stepped up by the new power. Further afield in densely populated Asia, where extermination or displacement seemed out of the question, Europe did not shrink from the attempt to destroy national resistances and sank to the level of introducing forced consumption of opium, as the Chinese remember to this day. In the areas of lesser resistance, Christianity was associated with cultural destruction.

The white peril has certainly been receding, but only very recently; this is the principal aspect of the achievement of the national liberation movement during the past half-century. There are, however, still some areas where this expansionism is active: South Africa, Palestine and Soviet Asia.

It is important to note here that this expansion, which must be attributed to the most fundamental laws of the capitalist mode of production, has acquired such force that it is pursued under the banner of progress, or of 'socialism'.[11] This shows how the social reality of nations and cultural areas goes beyond that of class and operates independently of the latter.

In South Africa the conflicts between the Boer settlers and British imperialism at the end of the last century, between 'white' workers and capital until the 1920s and 1930s, were part of working-class consciousness in the West well before solidarity with the black peasants hounded from their lands. In Palestine is any reminder necessary that Zionism emerged from a tendency within the labour movement of eastern Europe, before it took the conventional form of racism and colonial expansionism? In Turkestan, destruction by 'Soviet' authorities of 'Turkish communism' – which Sultan Galiyev tried to

organize – was prior to the 1930s when the 'Stalinist statist deviation' crystallized. Hence 'social-imperialism', to call it by the name the Maoists gave it later, dates back to the very origins of the Russian revolution. Russian imperialism has always looked East, towards Asia. And today this is the only region of the world that has escaped decolonization. The success of Russian colonization, to be sure, can be understood only within the context of the October Revolution and the concomitant social revolutionary transformations from which the Central Asian peoples did, indeed, initially benefit. However, since the end of the 1920s, the new Russian authorities have viewed with circumspection this emancipation of popular energies. Repression came quickly, with the condemnation of Sultan Galiyev, the crushing of the so-called 'nationalist' revolts (only Great Russian nationalism, it would appear, conforms to the objectives of socialism!). Repression was accompanied by a policy of artificially dividing the populations: in Turkestan 'national' dialects were substituted for the unifying Turkish language, after which the region was Russified and divided into four 'republics' — Kazakh, Kirgiz, Turkmen and Uzbek (all Turkish speaking); by a change of their language to Cyrillic script, the Tadzhiks (Farsi-speaking Iranians) were artificially detached from their Iranian and Afghani neighbours (just as the 'outer' Mongols were separated from the Mongols of the People's Republic of China by the same device). All this is reminiscent of the Berber Dahirs [royal fiats] in North Africa and the attempts to divide up the French Levant into Alawite, Damascene, Maronite, and other separate states. It is the perennial colonial policy of divide and rule in the name of 'deferring to particularities'! So, too, favourable conditions were established for settler colonization: the indigenous pastors of Kazakhstan were forced into semi-desert regions and replaced by Russians who now make up a half of the total population, settled by Khruschev (whose racism was displayed on many occasions, including when he proposed to Conrad Adenauer that the two countries join together in a 'common front of Europeans against the Yellow races'). A still worse fate awaited other Muslim peoples – for example the Tatars of Crimea and the Chechenoingush. Has this 'successful colonization' solved the problem once and for all? We cannot say for certain, but there are signs of national renewal in Turkestan, which was perhaps not unrelated to Moscow's invasion into Afghanistan, and the speedy replacement of Asiatic Soviet troops by Great Russians.

European expansion cannot therefore be narrowly reduced to capitalism. The force with which fusion of European culture and development of capitalism was expressed has become so powerful as to go further than the survival of the capitalist relations that engendered it. A force sufficient to put 'solidarity of the European peoples' before the principle of 'proletarian internationalism' proclaimed by Marxism. There are abundant instances of this: the sympathy and friendship shown to the 'people of Israel', despite their colonial arrogance; the understanding shown of Russification of central Asia, and of Soviet expansion in Afghanistan, sometimes tinged with a sort of nostalgic regret that capitalist Europe was unable to fare 'as well' (particularly in French North Africa).

How to understand these complex phenomena articulated on the fundamental laws of capitalism must have been the key issue posed to successive generations in Asia and Africa for at least a century and a half.

It was doubtless in China and Egypt that the three sets of political and ideological reaction to Euro-capitalist expansion were to be seen most strongly. But the same basic tendencies can be found elsewhere in Asia and Africa. The first reaction that might be called 'traditionalist nationalist' consisted of a rejection of 'modernization', with an effort to remain isolated. It was a reaction doomed to failure that at heart indicated only an insufficient awareness of the true relation of forces. The reaction, however, has not disappeared. It is continued at a 'theoretical' level by the refusal to describe the expansion in question as capitalist, and seeing it as only a 'European' reality; witness contemporary texts inspired by Gadafi-ism.[12] It survives in the renaissance of 'fundamentalisms' (Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.)

These are nowadays unable to reject 'modernization', an incontrovertible fact notwithstanding its distortions, and thereby say more about the failure of other reactions than their own strength.

The second kind of reaction is 'accepted modernization'. It envisages not only abandonment of the traditional modes of organization to the benefit of capitalist modes, but also erasure of the local culture to the benefit of a 'universal European' culture. Clearly this second aspect is limited by the pretensions of the local bourgeoisie to a 'national revivalist' role. In a hypocritical fashion the – most reactionary – vestiges of local social and cultural life are preserved, to be placed at the disposal of capitalist exploitation. Japan is undoubtedly the only success story in this domain.[13] Later attempts – by Ataturk or Shah Reza – were crowned with failure. The bourgeois modernist determination is nowadays on the defensive in Asia and Africa. Typical of this is the modernist proclamation of Mohamed Ali in Egypt of the first half of the 19th century and its failure; the resumption of the modernist theme by Taha Husayn, for example, proclaiming in the mid-1930s Egypt's 'European' (and non-'Oriental') vocation.[14] Nasserism did not fall into the trap, and proclaimed itself on the contrary to be 'Arab' (and modernist). But this reaction is still alive in Latin America, doubtless because the Europeanness of the continent allows it. It objectively strengthens the forces in favour of the option of capitalist development (and at a pinch – socialist development of the 'statist' type). In Asia and Africa it can still be found but in shamefaced form.

A third reaction has gradually grown up, of which Maoism is the first prototype. It is a revolutionary and national reaction. It calls for liberation of the popular and national forces by modernization through abandonment of the capitalist path. But this does not make it abandon a 'non-European' perspective on this modernization. Mao's itinerary is, in this regard, exemplary. Marxism has penetrated Asia and Africa through this channel. It is fairly clear that Marxism here becomes a force for transformation of society to the degree that it achieves a fusion between the perspective of social revolution and that of national liberation (a perspective going much further than the acquisition of independence and the construction of a state).

Communism and national liberation in Asia and Africa

Marxism has already become a decisive force for social transformation in Asia and Africa. It is on these two continents perhaps that it can be seen most closely associated with social transformations. It could not be said to have such effect in Europe and North America. But Marxism – according to Marx – is not a philosophy satisfied with interpreting history. It seeks to change it. Doubtless in Asia and Africa the character of the transition in which it shares is open to question (socialist transition or capitalist expansion?). But it is undeniable that it plays a genuine role in the life of the peoples.

In eastern Asia (China, Korea, Indochina) Marxism has an official presence.[15] In terms of overall population whose political and social administration is inspired by Marxism, the greatest numbers are in Asia. We have already considered the question of the relevance of Maoism, above, and shall not repeat it. Does the history of the penetration of Marxism in Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia confirm what we said of China? The superiority of the (Maoist) socialist strategy over the (revisionist) statist strategy as shown in the rates of development of the forces of production, not to mention the varying political prospects that these strategies open up (or close down), is confirmed by a comparison of North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

The initial advantages of Korea were similar in many ways to those of Vietnam, and were political. Korea is a small, homogeneous nation with a long tradition and attempted an anti-Confucian reformism in the 1860s and 1870s.

But this reformism retreated in the face of a peasant uprising in 1894 that bore a striking resemblance to the Taiping Rebellion in China and paved the way for Japan's intervention. The tradition associating national liberation with peasant revolution is here, as in Vietnam, the origin of the early constitution of the Korean Communist Party (founded in 1925) and its successful implantation, which enabled it to establish a genuine popular revolutionary regime in 1945, even before the arrival of the Soviet and American armies. A revolt in 1946 at Taegu in the American zone was crushed by the new occupying power, just as France behaved in Vietnam at the same period. Unlike the situation in Eastern Europe, socialism in Korea was not implanted from without by the Red Army.

Korea endured an unprecedented level of devastation during the Korean War (1950–53) so that North Korea was in an even more destitute condition than North Vietnam in 1954. But North Korea has managed to sustain remarkable rhythms of growth: it became self-sufficient in foodstuffs at an entirely satisfactory level of popular consumption (the minimum per capita ration was 200 kilograms). Industrial growth has been equally striking. Each step in its agrarian reform has been an undeniable success: after the reduction of ground rent in 1945 and the equal distribution of land in 1946 to the collectivization from 1953 to 1958, followed in 1958 by regrouping of co-operatives into units encompassing an average of 275 families. Agricultural output increased during each phase in this strategy. The secret of the success lies in the fact that no stage of this development brought any extraction of

agricultural surplus without compensation. Rather the reverse, industry financed the acceleration of agricultural growth. The growth in output was obtained without it being necessary to make any concessions to 'peasant individualism': private plots were modest in size (thirty to fifty square metres), infinitely smaller than in the USSR (with four per cent of land supplying twenty per cent of output), smaller even than in China and Vietnam. The use of machinery and tractors placed at the disposal of co-operatives was never compulsory (as it was in the system of Soviet machine and tractor stations). The exaction of tribute on agriculture was, moreover, the subject of a clear-sighted rejection by the Korean Party in an early, thinly veiled criticism of the Soviet model.

North Korea's development strategy is very close to China's. The famous slogan around which the Korean option was established – the Juche – means 'self-reliance'. The significance of this principle, which at first sight may appear rather banal, becomes evident when it is contrasted with the principle of Sadae ('relying on the great powers'), which was the unfortunate inspiration of the Yi imperial court seeking to compensate for its internal weaknesses by forming external alliances with China, Russia, and Japan. The restoration of self-confidence through Juche was seen as a way to mental decolonization. In 1956 during the Third Congress of the Korean Workers' Party a conflict broke out with the Soviet 'big brother', whose delegates openly criticized the Juche principle and advised the Koreans to enrol in the 'international socialist division of labour'. Korea refused and its leader Kim Il Sung did not hesitate to say: 'Their real purpose was to prevent our country acquiring economic independence'. This clear example of Korea's autocentric development shows the relevance of this option even for small countries, and that it pays off even in terms of simple economic growth.

The North Korean model is not without its flaws, far from it. Observers are struck by how bureaucratic the society is, although it must be admitted that this bureaucracy is fairly efficient and infinitely less police-ridden than in other countries (such as Vietnam). The leadership 'cult' brings the same danger as elsewhere. But it is the political shortcomings of the Korean experience that demand attention as it seems to have gone no further than Maoism in progress towards advanced socialist democracy. This essential issue recurs time and time again and it is in the final analysis the decisive issue. The economic success of North Korea highlights the meagre economic accomplishments of Vietnam and Cuba.

A clear-sighted analysis of the Vietnam situation encounters these obstacles. The Vietnamese people's glorious, thirty-year-long struggle for independence, national unity and socialism still too often clouds any critical judgement. However, observers are unanimous in acknowledging the suffocating, police-ridden atmosphere characteristic of North Vietnam since its liberation, a carbon copy of the Soviet archetype in its most irksome form, and a real starvation ration, complemented only thanks to a free market for the richest – that is, apart from the senior cadres traffickers and the corrupt. But the observer is always on the look-out for a way to soften the judgement through remarks on the effects of the war or the international conjuncture.

Vietnam does, however, hold political trump cards similar to those of Korea that also explain its success in the national liberation phase: a homogeneous nation, bourgeois reformist nationalism exhausted from before the Second World War and superseded by early communist implantation that was able to link the cause of national liberation with that of the peasant revolution. The strategy of unifying popular forces under a communist party founded on a worker and peasant alliance had been one of the major successes of our age and has held imperialist aggression in check. But the popular alliance here was absorbed throughout the historical period of its development in the struggle against foreign imperialism, while in China, in relentless struggle, it encountered the local bourgeoisie of the Kuomintang, at its outset and again from 1945. The support of China and the USSR played only an incidental role in Vietnam, as in North Korea.

In the aftermath of the 1954 victory, liberated North Vietnam embarked on a development strategy very similar to that implemented in China and Korea in the same period. Agrarian reform, from 1954 to 1959, was successful and initiated a marked growth in output of food-crops, comparable to that of China and Korea. Why then was collectivization, implemented in the 1960s, unable to build on the first success? An in-depth analysis of the political and social limitations at the origin of these unfortunate options has still to be made. However, collectivization in Vietnam, in a faithful imitation of the Soviet model, was associated with administrative extraction of surplus without compensation. A system of forced requisitions – fifteen to twenty-five per cent of output of paddy – was instituted and the price paid to the co-operatives for such rice deliveries was kept artificially low. As can be seen, this is exactly the reverse of the policy in Korea and China. Since that time Vietnamese agriculture has stagnated. In response to the stagnation, the authorities were caught in a constant oscillation between phases of repression and phases of capitalist style liberalization, and relying on private plots and the free market to compensate for the unbearable shortages. This is precisely the impasse in which the Soviet Union has been caught for half a century.

As the deleterious tendencies in the political system worsened through the years the authorities were ill-prepared to tackle the complex problem of the incorporation of the South, which in twenty years of American neo-colonialism had experienced distortions substantially greater than those inherited from French colonization in the North.

Vietnam's international options flow from this impasse. Unlike North Korea, which has opted for autonomous national development, Vietnam chose to join the international division of labour of COMECON dominated by the USSR, an option that blocks any genuine industrialization of the country. In these circumstances the Hanoi regime made a desperate bid for foreign expansionism, in the hope of grabbing the territory of Laos and Kampuchea and installing rural settler colonization to relieve its own rural overcrowding and alleviate the social crisis. Behind the 'Indo-Chinese Federation' constituted by military occupation of Laos and Kampuchea looms a plan for unequal division of labour, with the rice exacted from the subordinate

members intended to subsidize accelerated ('heavy') industrialization of Vietnam.

Marxism's penetration in Cambodia encountered this country's social structures as closer to those of South-East Asia and even tropical Africa than to those of China and Vietnam. Weak class differentiation within the peasantry (absence of a Confucian style 'feudalism'), combined with a low rate of colonial capitalist development, dictated a different strategy of struggle. The predominance of the Vietnamese element in Indochinese communism since the 1930s, and later the determination of the Vietnamese Communist Party to subject the Cambodians' strategy to the imperatives of its own (Sihanouk was advised to align with 'neutralism') held back the constitution of revolutionary forces in Kampuchea. It was for the Kampuchea Communist Party and the patriotic front it led to define an effective strategy (revolution uniting the peasantry against bureaucratic and mercantile exploitation) different from what would have followed slavish imitation of the Chinese and Vietnamese models, and keeping a distance from the 'advice' of the 'regional big brother'. This 'lesson' is rich in guidance for a large part of the contemporary Third World.

The extremely rapid and victorious development of this strategy – from 1965 and more particularly from 1970 to 1975 – is the cause of the later difficulties, problems and backsliding. The – peasant – revolution in Kampuchea from its victory in 1975 came up against the three great problems of the socialist transition of our age. How to reconcile such a peasant revolution with:
- the prospect of abolition of class;
- the requirements of development of the forces of production;
- the necessity of building a national state taking its place in the constellation of states of the modern world?

It might have been better to have been less ambitious and to have dealt first with the 'national question', unresolved owing to the Vietnamese backsliding and its expansionist ambitions. The backsliding in Democratic Kampuchea from 1975 to 1978 has other causes than the autocentric option of the Kampuchea Communist Party. Kampuchea had no other choice at the time. When Lon Nol and the Americans forsook Cambodia in February 1975, it was already famine-stricken. Phnom Penh, to which a third of the population had fled from American bombing, needed to be quickly evacuated. This desperate situation was aggravated still further by the Vietnamese, who were plotting to subordinate Kampuchea just as they had Laos. Kampuchea's response was to urge national unity above all else. The mistake lay in trying to base this on a policy of advanced socialist revolution that was not matched by the necessary broad alliance on the issue of the national question. The country's resulting weakness was exploited by the Vietnamese who, after their internal plots failed to overthrow the regime, decided in the end coldly to invade. The invasion of Kampuchea dictates a consideration of the 'national question–socialist progression' dialectic as it can arise in the modern world, from the starting point of victorious popular national liberations. In this context it must be said that second- or third-rate powers must inscribe their expansionist ambitions in the strategy of one of the superpowers. This is true of South-East Asia as it is of

conflicts in Latin America (Argentina against Chile or Brazil, for example), Africa, the Arab world, and Asia (Indo-Pakistan).

The 'justification' for these expansions was formulated by Brezhnev on the occasion of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It is the theory of 'limited sovereignty' of small countries caught inside the spheres of influence of the superpowers. Its crudity was refined for use by those more sensitive to the style of the labour tradition as the right of the 'eldest brother' to help his juniors avoid straying in the construction of socialism. That is how the USSR 'Party' arrogated to itself the right to decide between the Parcham and Khalq parties in Afghanistan, thinly veiling its intervention in the 'invitation' addressed by Babrak Karmal, then resident in Prague. It is how Le Duan after denying the invasion of Kampuchea (a Cambodian army led by Heng Samrin was alleged to have liberated it!) and in the same tone denying the 'slanderous' charge of seeking the establishment of an Indochinese Federation, which he later proclaimed, adhered to the theory of limited sovereignty, congratulated Moscow on its intervention in Afghanistan and encouraged it to solve the Polish question in the same way (was not Czechoslovakia the first 'socialist' country to be visited by the Hanoi leadership after 1975?). The idea must be dropped once and for all that foreign interventions may serve to 'save socialism'. The battle for socialism here includes the eradication of aggression, even if this requires a broad national alliance that means deferring socialist construction to a later date.

These comparisons[16] lead to the following conclusion: the starting point was a still largely rural, backward society which had experienced neither bourgeois and peasant revolution nor an agricultural technical revolution. At the heart of the problem of development was the question of rapid agricultural growth. In technical terms the question is one of the relationship between agriculture (the basis of development) and industry (the pre-eminent means of development in agriculture). In political terms it is one of a genuine urban–rural alliance and a state articulated on this alliance. Whenever this has been the case there has been socially progressive economic growth, moving towards socialist construction. Whenever it has been thought possible to 'speed up' development by exploiting the countryside and/or enrolling in the international division of labour, whether of capitalism or the Soviet bloc, things have turned out badly. The overall balance sheet of countries which opted for inscription in the capitalist division of labour is mediocre; and in the few countries where impressive rhythms of growth were recorded (but no more impressive than those of the socialist countries), the political picture is bleak indeed. As for countries inscribed within the Soviet bloc's division of labour, their decision has proved to be a disaster at the level of development of the forces of production and of the political prospects (systematic fascism). This is not a matter of explaining the local vicissitudes and conditions to account for the options; but merely of drawing the lesson, that there is no choice: a genuine national and popular development can only be a development founded on a worker and peasant alliance delinked from the world system. Maoism's contribution is to have understood this.

Elsewhere in Asia and Africa the power emerging from national liberation does not as a general rule claim to be Marxist (we shall come back to the question of Arab, African and Asian 'socialisms' and those who claim to be Marxist in South Yemen, Ethiopia, Angola or elsewhere). Does this mean that Marxism does not exist here, or is 'marginal', confined to – usually intellectual – often persecuted minorities without power? Is it a powerless minority as in the West? Such a judgement seems superficial.

The national liberation movements that have left such a mark on the history of the past half-century, changed the political map of the world, modified the international division of labour and location of industries and provoked an industrial crisis, changed the extent and perspective of world conflicts of the superpowers by intervening in their alliances, and in short, are among the most active agents of modern history, can be counted in their hundreds.[17] Most of them have been significantly active actors at a given moment and their approach has been influential not only in their own countries but in global evolutions. Few of these movements are of the kind of 'grouplets' or 'theoretical chapels' so common in the contemporary Western left and Marxism. The majority succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions, of militants and combatants (including soldiers). A good proportion of these movements claim at least in part to be Marxist, and most socialist. Their relations with local communist parties, of various persuasions, are always complex and ambivalent. In South-East Asia,[18] the liberation movements found themselves in a promising situation at the end of the Second World War: armed and holding the terrain the Japanese were abandoning.

The attempts at reconquest by the former colonial powers (Netherlands, Britain, France and the United States) encountered fierce popular resistance. But these movements did not have the strength that the movement in French Indochina had gained through being rooted in the peasantry under communist leadership. In Malaysia the movement was confined to the Chinese minority (a third of the population and almost entirely urban, constituting nearly the entire bourgeoisie and proletariat of the time), allowing the British, on the pretext of defending the Malay nation, to isolate and then defeat the guerrillas by the end of the 1960s. In Burma the hasty withdrawal of the British left the way open for a local moderate socialism, tinged with Buddhism, that virtually isolated the country from the rest of the world without committing it to drastic reforms. In Indonesia the local communist party was to shift from one extreme to the other: from undisguised hostility to Soekarno's 'bourgeois' movement to submissive collaboration with the nationalist state, without being able to exert any real influence on its evolution. This policy led to the notorious catastrophe of 1960: when the limitations of Soekarno's 'socialism' were discovered, a deterioration in the situation facilitated a *coup d'état* and bloody massacre of the popular forces. In the Philippines the formally independent character of the country and the low level of maturity of the popular movements of the time also permitted the apparent re-establishment of neo-colonial order. Thailand, which had not undergone colonization and where the fusion of the ruling landowning class and the Chinese bourgeoisie was more real and longstanding

(dating back to the reforms of the 1930s), did not suffer the same somersaults; and the anti-fascist left-wing government was not able to hold on beyond 1950. Once neo-colonial order was re-established, the region as a whole in the course of the past twenty years or so experienced a pronounced capitalist upsurge, induced by American military expenditure in the Vietnam war (Thailand's case in particular) and Japan's expansion (mining and oil exploitation, spread of export crop plantations, industrial installations in the free zones, etc.). This upsurge has brought significant rural changes (the green revolution and development of agrarian capitalism in Thailand) and sometimes the beginning of the constitution of local finance capital (Singapore).

In the Indian sub-continent[19] the national liberation struggle crystallized from the beginning of the century around the Indian Congress. The obstacles to the rapid progress of Marxism here were of all kinds: Hinduism and its cultural legacy (the issue of caste), the sharp division between Hindus and Muslims, the relative strength of the Indian bourgeoisie (a factor of colonial development), the Indian intelligentsia's extreme intellectual dependence on Europe (in contrast with the complete autonomy of its Chinese counterpart; it is typical that the local communist leader M. N. Roy bent over backwards to try to win over the International, whereas Mao listened with only half an ear and did what he wanted). The Indian bourgeoisie was thus able to dominate the national movement, to construct a gigantic organization of social recruitment in the Congress (interclass, interethnic, etc.), to unify the nationalities of the sub-continent (the Muslims in West Pakistan and East Bengal being the only failure), and to reduce the communist party to servile imitation of Western Parliamentary communism. This success enabled the first Congress administration – under Nehru's leadership – to launch the country on 'semi-industrialization', strengthening the statist–industrialist wing of the bourgeoisie and reducing within the hegemonic alliance the position of the large landowners and the rural bourgeoisie, the principal transmission belt of imperialist power in the previous stage of British India. The contradictions between these two sections of the ruling class were not, however, eliminated, as the green revolution came to strengthen the dominant social status of the such kulaks, especially in the provinces of North-West India. The erosion of the nationalist and 'socialist' illusions of Nehru's statism were, under the circumstances, to lead to exploitation of popular discontent by the forces of the agrarian right, who took their revenge in the brief period of the electoral success of the Janata Party in 1976. In Pakistan, the hegemonic agrarian alliance was never truly threatened from within, by virtue of the absence of an autonomous industrial bourgeoisie. Conversely the country's unity, founded on Islam, could not withstand the clash of interests between this hegemonic alliance (based on the Punjab farmers) and the huge poverty-stricken masses of Bengal. The Bengali petty bourgeoisie was in these circumstances able to recuperate the popular revolt and establish itself as the dominant class of a state in India's wake. In Sri Lanka, an attempt at populist reformism, observing the constraints of world development, pursued by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, rapidly reached its limits, as is shown by the revolutionary explosion that

followed and, when this failed, by a return to a policy more in accordance with the logic of neo-colonialism.

In the Middle East,[20] from Iran to Egypt, the last century has been full of repeatedly abortive attempts to construct a national bourgeois hegemony. Egypt opened the cycle with the early attempt by Mohamed Ali (1801–40), whose failure was followed by British occupation (1882), and the first compradorization of the bourgeoisie and the Egyptian state. The first national liberation movement with the Wafd, attempted to seal the alliance of the new comprador bourgeoisie and the financial aristocracy, turned into a bourgeoisie by agrarian capitalist development. This alliance was beset with contradictions it could not manage to overcome (characterized by the succession to power of a nationalist-inclined Wafd and pro-British royal dictatorships), excluded the rural and urban popular masses and persecuted their autonomous organizations (notably the unions, and the communist party – banned from its foundation in 1922). The second attempt to establish bourgeois hegemony was associated with the rise and radicalization of Nasserism (1960–67). It had a popular base (land reform, industrialization, etc.) but did not enjoy genuine autonomy, and this experience in turn capsized, opening the way to the second compradorization of the state and national capital. The implantation of the imperialist base in the region represented by the State of Israel played a key part in this failure. The resonance of Nasserism throughout the Arab world led to a replication of the model under the banner of the Ba'ath in Syria and Iraq, without this preventing the gradual slide of the national project into transnationalization. In Turkey the modernist revival undertaken by Kemal Ataturk and Inonu faced the same limitations, despite the Soviet support it, too, enjoyed at the beginning in the phase of confrontation with Western imperialism. The continual repression of the popular and working-class forces led logically to the neo-comprador pro-American regime from 1950, when the Democratic Party of Menderes relaxed the Kemalism of the Republican People's Party. A very similar story occurred in Iran in the 1920s and 1930s with Shah Reza Khan Pahlavi, when, after the brief period of the rise of popular movements after the Second World War, the failure of the Soviet attempt to exploit this movement by the creation of a satellite Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, followed by the period of Mossadegh (1952), under the rule of Shah Reza's son Shah Mohamed Reza. From being a national plan it slid through its own internal logic into transnationalization. The emergence of finance capital in the Gulf and the accelerated 'semi-industrialization' of the OPEC countries from 1973 created the illusion of a potential national bourgeois crystallization. But is there not a bleak future for such rentier states? And is semi-industrialization based on oil royalties any different from that of the other regions in the contemporary periphery? Afghanistan, kept aloof from 'modernization' by the balance of Russian (then Soviet) and British interests, did not enter modern history until later, with the timid reformism of the Republic proclaimed in 1973, after the *coup d'état* of Mohammad Daoud. This superficial modernization, beset with contradictions, is the origin of a radical reformist urban party claiming to be Marxist (the People's Democratic Party, of Afghanistan founded in 1965), split

since 1967 (between Khalq and Parcham) and incapable of controlling the situation created by the overthrow of Daoud's government in a *coup d'état*; hence opening the way to Soviet intervention in December 1979 on behalf of Karmal's group (Parcham) after the failure of the radical efforts of the Khalq (under Noor Mohammed Taraki's then Hafizullah Amin's leadership).

Expulsion of the Palestinian population from their country by Zionist colonization had serious but contradictory effects on the whole region. On the one hand the Arab–Israeli conflict has served and serves as an indicator of the historical impotence of the Arab ruling classes, and on the other it nurtures 'nationalist' illusions as to the nature of these classes. These contradictions can also be seen within the Palestinian liberation movement, without it being possible to say that we have reached the point of understanding that 'liberation of the Palestinian soil', Arab unity, and the radical socialist transformation of the entire society, must be seen as a single and unique aim.

North Africa[21] and sub-Saharan Africa,[22] directly subjected to the colonial yoke, have thereby been backward in forming a local bourgeoisie, while the liberation movement assigned itself the primary objective of independence. In French North Africa, the alignment of local communist parties with the imperialist policy of the French Communist Party contributed to leaving the leadership of the popular movement in the hands of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The circumstances of the struggle on the one hand – the still recent history of the Rif war in Morocco (1925), the armed pattern of the liberation war in Algeria – and on the other, the more or less marked degree of development of the urban and agrarian bourgeoisie, were to determine the later differences between the three Maghrebin states. South of the Sahara the liberation movement was peasant-oriented in the phases of acute struggle (the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya, Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) in Cameroon, peasant risings in Zaire and Madagascar and finally, a peasant revolution in Ethiopia). As imperialism had taken the initiative of the 'grant of independence', it led to a range of regimes going from overt neo-colonialism dominated by a comprador bourgeoisie, based on a mercantile and agrarian bourgeois alliance or on traditional chiefdoms (Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, etc.) to a neo-colonialism 'in crisis', where such a basis was absent (Mali, Benin, Congo, Tanzania . . .) or popular pressure had sharpened the contradictions between the bureaucracy and the bourgeois classes in question (Ghana). The successive generations of 'socialist' experiences on the continent are explained by these crises, the character of which accounts for the limitations and, at times, even the apparent extravagances, such as those typifying the comprador bureaucratic regimes who go so far as to proclaim themselves 'Marxist–Leninist' without raising the issue of the internal social order and integration in the imperialist system (Congo, Benin). The Portuguese colonies were made to appear more radical by the factor of the prolonged armed struggle waged against Portuguese colonialism, and led by the factor of South African aggression to seek the support of the USSR and its allies (Cuba), but nothing in their nature indicates the probability of a different future. The Soviet theory of 'national democracy' and the 'non-capitalist path', pronounced in the 1960s to

justify support for African and Arab socialisms, was bankrupted by the failure of the first generation of these regimes (Nasser, Nkrumah, etc.). The Soviet Union, where it thinks it has the power, now presses for the formation of 'Marxist–Leninist' parties at the behest of government leadership (Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen). It is doubtful if these parties will be any different to the 'left' parties of the comprador bureaucracy of the previous generation; although the peasant revolutionary dimension in Ethiopia presents a subtle difference.

Here, as in the Middle East, elimination of South African white colonization is central to the problems of the continent's liberation. On the one hand South African arrogance shows up the impotence of the ruling classes of the independent African states. On the other hand, the same kind of capitalist system and integration in the world system should force the proletariat in South Africa and the African peasantry to count on their own resources. The idea has gained ground since the liberation struggle has entered a qualitatively new stage since the summer of 1985. Illusions about possible Soviet foreign intervention making up for the insufficiencies of the popular struggles throughout Southern Africa, entertained by the main movements (including the African National Congress) take the place of the old 'liberal' illusions. Formerly the South African Communist Party called for a 'union' of white and black workers, in the belief that apartheid was in conflict with the logic of capitalism. Everything indicates the reverse, as the functional role of this system permits a strong accumulation thanks to super-exploitation of black workers and peasants. South Africa can be seen as a microcosm of the world imperialist system, with the 'centre/periphery' dividing line here becoming internal to the society.

At the end of these 30 years, failure of the popular forces has to be admitted as they have not managed to ally national liberation to the prospect of socialist transition, to embark on the path of an 'uninterrupted revolution by stages', to complete the 'bourgeois' tasks of the 'national democratic' revolution under a political leadership ensuring the hegemony of the popular classes. Does this mean that the national liberation movement, under the leadership of bourgeois forces, has completed its task, fulfilled its role of bourgeois revolution, opened the way to the constitution of a national bourgeoisie? The character of capitalist development that has followed the emergence of this kind of state, the specific contradictions of this development typified by extreme distortions at the social and political level, are a denial of this fashionable thesis. In response to the crisis in the world system apparent since the 1970s, the attempt of the Third World states to win a favourable readjustment of the world system (the New International Economic Order) has met a failure that provides evidence of the fragility of the national bourgeois constructions.

If the 'imperialist cut-off point' at the end of the 19th century has any meaning it is this: until then it was possible for new bourgeoisies to establish themselves as national bourgeoisies while integrating in the worldwide expansion of capitalism, but today this integration 'compradorizes' these bourgeoisies and aborts the – repeated – attempts at national construction.

Infitah in the Arab world is typical of this process of transnationalization–compradorization, but it is far from being the only example. There is therefore a new wave of popular revolts appearing in Asia and Africa, in response to the impotence of the bourgeoisie and the destructive effects of imperialist expansion. In East and South-East Asia, in South Korea and the Philippines, the struggle has been resumed on more advanced grounds than ever, whereas in Indonesia 'Islamic populism' expresses the initial popular response to the bankruptcy of the neo-colonial 'putting things straight' of the Suharto regime. In India, where Congress lost its characteristic integrating skills, the way was opened to radical peasant struggles, of which the Naxalite movement was only the first symptom. Throughout the Muslim world Islamic populism is evidence of the profound crisis affecting the societies subjected to the continually 'peripheral' expansion of capitalism. Illusions of the path of 'national democracy' have sometimes been replaced by illusions of rejoining the imperialist system; but only for a while, as the bankruptcy of the 'straightening out' under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund and the United States is even more severe than that of the failing 'nationalist' regimes. The same phenomenon occurs in Africa (in Ghana for example). Doubtless the 'populisms' in question, although a good expression of what the people in general reject, are incapable of offering a coherent alternative strategy (as the case of Iran shows). The character of these populisms – broad alliances of class – is a good indication of the fact that we are really still at the phase of 'national liberation', that is, of a broad anti-imperialist front. Moreover, from these flash points imperialism on the attack exerts increasing pressure on several regions of Asia and Africa (witness Israel's arrogant expansionism and South Africa's aggression). Going beyond the populism in question is on the agenda. By the same token Marxism asserts its Asian and African vocation, as it has already asserted it in eastern Asia.

The Asian and African vocation of Marxism

Our conclusion can be expressed in six theses:

1. The worldwide expansion of capitalism – inherent at the outset – far from gradually diminishing the heterogeneity of the world has, on the contrary, emphasized its division into capitalist centres and peripheries. This particular form of expansion of the capitalist mode of production has made the contradiction between dominant capital and populations of the periphery an active factor in the forefront of the stage, whereas the fundamental (labour/capital) contradiction defining capitalism has been pushed into the background.

2. Imperialism in the Leninist sense has emphasized this characteristic. Until the end of the 19th century the emergence of new national bourgeoisies integrating in the worldwide expansion of capitalism was possible. It is so no longer, and the attempts at constituting new national bourgeoisies in Asia and

Africa are therefore doomed to failure, compradorization and trans-nationalization.

3. The working class at the centres has lost its revolutionary vocation by renouncing its plan for its own society and for the abolition of class. The paths of abolition of class are therefore completely unheard of in the centres. The dominant positions these countries occupy in the international division of labour provide the basis for democratic tradition and recourse to elections as the mode of political administration of society. As a result, there is no foreseeable prospect of governments other than moderate socialist or right-wing liberal, and the distinction between such regimes is of no great social consequence.

The ripening of socialist consciousness in these societies is held back by two obstacles: a) Pillage of the Third World creates internal solidarities within these societies (so-called 'national interests') that are a political reality; and b) so long as fractions of the left and the labour movement continue to regard the Soviet society as 'socialist', so long will they contribute to delaying the ripening of socialist consciousness in the West.

Moreover, it must be understood that abolition of class and commodity categories of value will also require a long period of transition in these societies. The problems of that transition, although in some respects different from that in the countries of capitalist underdevelopment, are no less complex. Huge structural changes must be made in the fundamental area of labour organization, the close integration in the international division of labour, and in the ideological structures; they leave no doubt that the transition stage will be difficult.

By contrast, the unequal development of capitalism gives the peoples of Asia and Africa an unforeseen vocation: they are called upon to overthrow the capitalist order in their own locality. Here, the combination of class struggle and imperialist domination makes democratic national revolutions a possibility under the leadership of a popular and national alliance for liberation.

4. Marxism and the labour and socialist movement have advanced by stages. At each stage living Marxism has acquired a new skin, has been transformed and enriched in response to a new situation. The laws Marx discovered and formulated about the evolution of societies also apply to Marxism.

Marx's Marxism was a response to the problems of a possible socialist revolution in 19th century capitalist Europe, that is, before the constitution of the world imperialist system. The working class of the time, subjected to the relentless demands of accumulation on the scale of the European capitalist nations, was thereby potentially revolutionary. In the less advanced European countries, this accumulation was coupled with the still incomplete primitive accumulation. Impoverishment of the rural masses, combined with that of the proletariat, created favourable conditions for an uninterrupted revolution by stages, for the passage from a democratic stage to the socialist stage. The theory of the weakest links had already been formulated and applied by Marx himself to Germany and Spain.

But Marxism did not begin to penetrate the working classes of the West until

later, towards the 1870s and 1880s, when the constitution of the imperialist system was already under way. The law of accumulation ceased to operate within the framework of each of the European nations but expanded to the world field. Henceforth, the most explosive effects of this now global accumulation process would be concentrated in the peripheries. The ambivalences of the Second International stem from the fact that it had not grasped this change.

Leninism brought the labour movement out of an impasse by making it aware of this qualitative transformation. The first socialist revolution retrospectively confirmed Marx's expectations. It occurred in the most backward capitalist country of Europe, the weakest link where the bourgeois and peasant revolution and the socialist revolution were telescoped into one. Lenin's contribution is to have understood this. But the historical limitations of Leninism are more visible today. Bolshevism was not ready to consider the worker and peasant alliance as the enduring strategic condition for the transition to socialism. It arose from the labour tradition established in a more advanced Europe where the bourgeois revolution had already resolved the land question. That is why Bolshevism tried to do no more than implant itself in the working class, following the ideas of the Second International. Furthermore, Russia was not part of the new periphery, subjected to imperialist domination. It was itself a nascent albeit backward imperialist power since it had not accomplished its bourgeois revolution. Revisionism is the offspring of history, the consequence of the limitations of Bolshevism.

The movement to establish and reinforce the imperialist system, which Lenin had grasped at its beginnings, would continue. That is why the second socialist revolution occurred in a country of the periphery: China. There it was not only a case of the bourgeois and peasant revolution and the socialist revolution being telescoped into one. The revolution was also anti-imperialist, that is, a triumphant struggle to disengage the country from the field of imperialist exploitation. Maoism's contribution is precisely that of going further than Leninism, in understanding that the worker and peasant alliance and the withdrawal from the system of the capitalist division of labour, are inextricably intertwined and enduring strategic conditions for the transition to socialism in the age of imperialism. Since the victory of the Chinese revolution, the capitalist system has gone on developing and changing. For some it has ceased to be imperialist in the Leninist sense: the bourgeois revolution is complete in numerous countries of the Third World, and capitalism is developing there on the basis of a national bourgeois power, integrated in the worldwide capitalist system. If this is the case we are brought back to the schemas of Marx's day, except that Europe has virtually become the world. For others, world development since the Second World War is founded on a division into imperialist centres and peripheries dominated by imperialism, where local power can be no more than that of a compradorized bourgeoisie. Should this be the case, the Maoist strategy is still the only effective answer to the essential problems of the transition to socialism.

History will decide which of the two analyses is correct. If the socialist

transformation will operate from the more advanced regions of the world system and the more backward regions will benefit from the powerful forces of production of the former to speed up their interdependent development. Or alternatively if this transformation will occur from the backward regions; in such case the latter will have only their own resources to count on.

5. This analysis raises the following new issues for Marxism: a) Worldwide expansion of capitalism encourages an analysis of value not as a national category but as a world category.[23] b) The alliances of popular and revolutionary classes that come to state power in countries committed to the socialist transition do not operate on the social reality to be changed by direct manifestation as classes but by the manifestation of strategy through state power. Evidently this retains autonomy of that power relative to social class. In this sense the state is not only the instrument of the eventual dictatorship of workers and peasants but also the locus where an alternative class may be reconstituted. The obligations facing the countries to withdraw from the international division of labour (delinking) gives the states in question a national function. The state cannot wither away although eventually much later the system of nation-states may. c) The association, in reality, of capitalism's expansion to Europe's gives the problems of national liberation and possible socialist transition a cultural dimension that cannot be removed from the political reality. d) Historical materialism, far from being completed, has not yet solved the issues of effective articulation of the various social realities: the basic ones of class, the state (and power), nation and culture.[24]

6. Marxism thereby acquires an Asian and African vocation. In the developed West it is tending to become an academic current without the power of transforming reality.[25] But in the Orient it is tending to become a genuine force for social transformation. This is not by chance. The question heading the agenda for the foreseeable future, what is at stake in the real struggles, is not capitalism or socialism in the West, but liberation and development in Asia and Africa according to the Indian or Vietnamese or Chinese model (and at this level the Maoist path undoubtedly offers the best advantage). The latter transformation is, however, contradictory and ambivalent. If it cannot be reduced to a stage, albeit distorted, of capitalist expansion, no more can it be seen as a guaranteed transition towards the abolition of class. Marxism here is therefore potentially an ideology of power of a new dominant class and/or an ideology of liberation from exploitation. This historical view of Marxism condemns those 'fundamentalists' who judge reality according to the criteria of its distance from 'absolute truth'. It seeks to apply to Marxism as a social reality its own critical criteria.

Notes

1. The point of view that capitalism was operating from the outset as a 'world' system (or 'World-Economy') and not as a system of capitalist, national capitalist

economies venturing on worldwide expansion after having ensured the conquest of their 'national markets' is new. This viewpoint is systematically expressed in the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, André Gunder Frank, Giovanni Arrighi and myself (see our collective work *Dynamics of Global Crisis*). In our interpretation of the formation of the capitalist mode, the constitution of complete (central) national capitalist formations and of the system of the capitalist world economy are concomitant up to the end of the 19th century. After which, a contradiction appears between participation in this world economy and the constitution of new complete formations; from then on it becomes impossible to overcome 'underdevelopment' without breaking the integration in the world system (this is the ultimate meaning of Lenin's 'cut-off point' of imperialism).

2. Two longstanding and constant debates in the history of Marxism should be recalled here: a) The debate on the 'national question' in the Second and Third International. For a retrospective summary of this debate, see our bibliography (*Class and Nation*, pp. 265–6), and among other works for the early period: Molnar, Miklos, *Marx, Engels et la politique internationale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975; Haupt, G., Lowy, M. and Weill, C., (eds), *Les marxistes et la question nationale, 1848–1914*, Paris, Maspero, 1974; Haupt, G. and Reberioux, M., (eds), *La Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, Paris, Cujas, 1967; and for the later period, *Manifestes, thèses et résolutions des quatre premiers congrès de l'Internationale communiste 1919–23*, Paris, Maspero, 1975, and the writings of Lenin and Stalin on the national and colonial question. b) The debate on the question of the role of the peasantry. The debate originally centred on the question of the 'Asiatic mode of production' (Karl Wittfogel's theses, renewed by Ferenc Tökei's; see *Class and Nation*, p. 260, and our thesis on the tribute-paying mode of production, a complete form of which the feudal mode is the incomplete form). The debate gradually moved on to tackle the questions of exploitation of the contemporary peasantry by capitalism and the revolutionary vocation of the exploited peasants (*Class and Nation*, pp. 270–71).

3. For a more systematic discussion of Maoism, see Samir Amin, *The Future of Maoism*; Carrère d'Encausse, H. and Schram, S. R., *Marxism and Asia*, London, Allen Lane, 1969; Schram, Stuart, *Mao Tse-tung*, London, Penguin, 1966; Collotti-Pischel, Enrica, *La Révolution ininterrompue*, Paris, Julliard, 1964; Chesneaux, J. et al, *La Chine 1840–1976*, (4 vols), Paris, Hatier, 1969–1978; Chesneaux, Jean, *Peasant Revolts in China, 1840–1949*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1973; Nee, Victor and Peck, James, (eds), *China's Uninterrupted Revolution*, New York, Pantheon, 1975; *Débat sur la ligne générale du mouvement communiste international*, Peking Publishing House, 1965.

4. See Bettelheim, Charles, *Les luttes de classes en URSS 1917–1939*. For Soviet debates in the 1920s (Bukharin, Preobazhensky, Kamenev, etc.) see *Class and Nation*, p: 277.

5. This was my point of view on the law of value, inspired by that of the Cultural Revolution; a view shared by others at the time, such as Rossana Rossanda, 'Le marxisme de Mao' in *Il Manifesto*, Paris, Seuil, 1971.

6. For a critique of self-management from my own point of view see *The Future of Maoism* and the bibliography on the self-management tendency and leftwing communism, *Class and Nation*, p. 280.

7. The fundamental debate of our time: on the relationship between worldwide expansion of capitalism and imperialism. For our viewpoint, see *Class and Nation*, chapter 8 'The Theory of Imperialism and the Contemporary Crisis', and bibliography p. 268; and the works of André Gunder Frank. For a diametrically opposite point of view, Chaliand, Gérard, *Revolution in the Third World: Myths and*

Pioneer of Capitalism. From this contrast on the prospects for capitalist development of the periphery of the system, flows another on the character of the 'transition'. For our viewpoint here see *Class and Nation*, chapters 6 and 7; for an opposite point of view Chaliand, Gérard, *Revolution in the Third World: Myths and Prospects*, Hassocks, Harvester, 1977. Similarly the analysis of the current crisis conceived of as a crisis of the capital–labour relationship at the centre of the system is opposed to our own: a crisis above all of the imperialist system (see Amin et al, *La crise de l'impérialisme*; and *Dynamics of Global Crisis*). See also chapter 3 above.

8. *Class and Nation*, p. 255.

9. For an analysis of the 'North–South' debate within the crisis, see *Dynamics of Global Crisis*; and the reference to our articles on the subject at p. 247.

10. For a more profound analysis of the international situation from my own viewpoint, see *La crise de l'impérialisme*, *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, *The Future of Maoism*, and chapter 2 above.

11. For information on the positions of the labour movement in the colonies and the Third World, see Melotti, Umberto, *Marx and the Third World*, London, Macmillan, 1977; La Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient; documents of the Baku Congress (1920) and the Third International which echo the debates on the questions raised by the Indian M. N. Roy, the Soviet Turk Sultan Galiyev, and on the strategies and tactics with regard to the essential poles of national liberation at the time: Kemalist Turkey, Iran, Egypt, India and China. For a critique of communist party policies see Madjarian, Grégoire, *La question coloniale et la politique du Parti communiste français 1944–1947*, Paris, Maspero, 1977. On Russian Asia, see Bennigsen, Alexandre and Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal, *Les musulmans oubliés*, Paris, Maspero, 1981; Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène, *L'empire éclaté*, Paris, Flammarion, 1978; Cagnat, René and Jan, Michel, *Le milieu des empires*, Paris, Laffont, 1981.

12. For a Gadafi-ist critique of Marxism, see Hasan Al-Daiyiqah's *On Samir Amin and the methodological problems of Marxist historians* (in Arabic).

13. The issue of the character of the 'Meiji revolution', still the centre of debate in Japan, has been taken up again in a text of Masao Kitazawa (published by UNU-Tokyo).

14. Husayn, Taha, *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, Cairo, 1937 (in Arabic).

15. In the abundant literature on the region, see, among others: Brun, Ellen and Hersh, Jacques, *Socialist Korea*, New York, London, Monthly Review Press, 1976; Rousset, Pierre, *Communisme et nationalisme vietnamien*, Paris, Galilée, 1978; Hémery, Daniel, *Révolutionnaires vietnamiens et pouvoir colonial en Indochine*, Paris, Maspero, 1975; Loche, Massimo, *Il vulcano indocina*, Turin, Edit-Nova, 1975; Pomonti, J.-C. and Thion, S., *La crise cambodgienne*, Paris, Idées, 1976; Thion, Serge and Kiernan, Ben, *Khmers rouges!*, Paris, J. E. Hallier-Albin Michel, 1981; Quiminal, Catherine, *Le Kampuchéa. Viêt-nam-Cambodge, guerres et indépendance*, Paris, Anthropos, 1982.

16. And others outside the Afro-Asiatic domain. See for example our assessment of the Cuban experience in *The Future of Maoism*, pp. 88–9.

17. From the Congress of the Peoples of the East held at Baku (1920) to the Asian–African Conference (at Bandung, 1955) one can measure the path that leads the national liberation movements to state power. For an excellent listing of the movements see: *Per il diritto e la liberazione dei popoli, Le Lotte in Asia, Africa e America Latina, a cura di Piero Gamacchio*, Milan, Mazzotta, 1981. The role of North–South relations we believe to be essential in the current crisis, is analysed in our works on the crisis cited earlier.

18. Good bibliographies in: Devilliers, Fistié and Le Thanh Khoi, *L'Asie du Sud-Est*, (2 vols), Paris, Sirey, 1971; Gough, K. and Sharma, H. P., *Imperialism and revolution in South Asia*, New York, London, Monthly Review Press [1973]; Nartsupha, Chatthip et al, (eds), *The Political Economy of Siam 1910–1932*, Bangkok, Social Science Association of Thailand, 2nd print, 1981; Husin Ali, Syed, *The Malays*, reprint, Kuala Lumpur, Heinemann, Asia, 1981.

19. Thorner, Daniel, *The Shaping of Modern India*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers for Sameeksha Trust, 1980; Dasgupta, Biplab, *The Naxalite Movement*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1974; Henri-Lévy, Bernard, Bangladesh, *Nationalisme dans la Révolution*, Paris, Maspero, 1973; Ali, Tariq, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power*, London, Cape, 1970; Jayawardena, Visakha Kumari, *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Ceylon*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1972.

20. Tomiche, F. J., *Syndicalisme et certains aspects du travail en Republique Arabe Unie, Egypte, 1900–1967*, Paris, Maisonneuve and Larose, 1974; Galissot, René et al, *Mouvement ouvrier, communisme et nationalisme dans le monde arabe*, Paris, Ed. Ouvrières, 1978; Amin, Samir, *The Arab Nation*; [Hassan Riad], *L'Egypte nassérienne*, Paris, Minuit, 1964; Amin, Samir, *Syrie et Irak 1960–1980*, Paris, Minuit, 1982; Ghalioun, Bouthane, *Etat et lutte de classes en Syrie 1945–1970*, Paris, 1974; Samarbakhsh, A. G., *Socialisme en Irak et en Syrie*, Paris, Anthropos 1980; Fawzy, Didar, *La République du Soudan*, Algiers, Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, vol. 1 [1972?], vol. 2 [1975]; Halliday, Fred, *Arabia without Sultans*, Pelican, 1974; Chaliand, Gérard, *Report from Afghanistan*, New York, Viking, London, Penguin, 1982; Behrang, *Iran: le maillon faible*, Paris, Maspero, 1979; Bekir Hurputlu, Kamuram, *La Turquie dans l'impasse*, Paris, Anthropos, 1974; Ali, Ahmet, *Développement économique en Turquie*, Paris, Anthropos, 1981; *Le mouvement de libération du peuple palestinien*, Paris, n.d.; Raouf, Fuad, *Introduction à une étude de la révolution palestinienne*, University of Paris-8, Cahiers 9, 1973. Numerous works in Arabic (of Rifaat el Said, Abdel Azim Ramadan, Tarek el-Bishry, etc.); *Revue d'études Palestiniennes* (Beirut and Paris).

21. Harbi, Mohammed, *Le F.L.N., mirage et réalité*, Editions J.A., 1980; *Abdelkrim et la République du Rif*, Maspero, 1976; Lacheraf, Mostefa, *L'Algérie, nation et société*, Paris, Maspero, 1965.

22. On the 'socialist' experiences in Africa: Ameillon, B., *La Guinée, bilan d'une indépendance*, Paris, Maspero, 1964; Condé, Alpha, Guinée: *Albanie d'Afrique ou néo-colonie américaine?*, [Paris], Git le coeur, 1972; Fitch, Bob and Oppenheimer, Mary, *Ghana: End of an Illusion*, New York, London, Monthly Review Press, 1966; Woungly-Massaga, *La révolution au Congo*, Paris, Maspero, 1974; Shivji, Issa G., *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, London, Heinemann, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1975; Cabral, Amilcar, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979, London, Heinemann, 1980; Andrade, Mario de, *Amilcar Cabral. Essai de biographie politique*, Paris, Maspero, 1980; Rudebeck, Lars, *Guinea-Bissau. A Study of Political Mobilization*, Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1974; Gabriel, Claude, *Angola, le tournant africain?*, Paris, La Brèche, 1978; CEDETIM, *Angola: la lutte continue*, Paris, Maspero, 1977; Lefort, René, *Ethiopia: an Heretical Revolution*, London, Zed, 1983; *Union des Populations du Cameroun, L'UPC Parle*, Paris, Maspero, 1970; Archer, Robert, *Madagascar depuis 1972*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1976; Desjeux, Dominique, *La question agraire à Madagascar*, L'Harmattan, 1979; Verhaegen, Benoît, *Rébellions au Congo*, Brussels, CRISP, Kinshasa, IRES, 1966. General works on national liberation and neo-colonialism: Bénot, Yves, *Idéologies des indépendances africaines* (2nd ed.) Paris, Maspero, 1972; Meynaud, Jean and Salah-

Bey, Anisse, *Le Syndicalisme africain*, Paris, Payot, 1963; Davies, Ioan, *African Trade Unions*, London, Penguin, 1966; Hodgkin, Thomas, *African Political Parties*, London, Penguin, 1961; Segal, Ronald (ed.) *African Profiles*, London, Penguin, 1962; Gibson, Richard, *African Liberation Movements*, London, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1972; Friedland, William H., and Rosberg, Carl G., (eds), *African Socialism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press for Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1964; Palmberg, Mai, (ed.) *Problems of Socialist Orientation in Africa*, Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1978.

For the debate on South Africa: Thion, Serge, *Le Pouvoir pâle*, Paris, Seuil, 1969; Lefort, René, *L'Afrique du Sud, histoire d'une crise*, Paris, Maspero, 1977, Davidson, B., Slovo, J. and Wilkinson, A. R., *Southern Africa: the New Politics of Revolution*, London, Penguin, 1976; Jaffe, Hosea, *The Pyramid of Nations*, [Milan], Victor, 1980.

23. For my analysis of value as a world category see *Imperialism and Unequal Development*, *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism*, and chapter 2 above.

24. *Class and Nation*; Brucan, Silviu, *The Dialectic of World Politics*, New York, Free Press, 1978. The debate on the relationship between culture, its special characteristics, and the worldwide character of capitalism is the focus of an abundant and varied literature on 'heritage'. See in Arabic for example the works of Hussein Meroue and Tayeb el Tizini (and our critique in Arabic in *The Crisis of Arab Society*).

25. Perry Anderson's evocative title *Considerations on Western Marxism* and his avowal on the ideology in question (see *Class and Nation*) are evidence of this. There are obviously excellent histories of Marxism, including *Storia del Marxismo*, 4 vols., Turin, Einaudi, 1978–1982; *Storia del Marxismo contemporaneo*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1975; Souyri, Pierre, *Le marxisme après Marx*, Paris, Flammarion, 1970 (a useful summary).

5. On the Green Movements

The 1960s saw the development among the youth of the West of movements of social 'contestation' – to use one of their own words – expressing a revolt against the forms of living imposed by capital then in full-blown expansion: alienating work, the patriarchal family, militarization. Movements that were highly diverse in scale and appeal shared a common rejection of traditional forms of organization and action by the left and the labour movement they considered to be 'recuperated' and 'part of the system', but this earned them contempt and at times hostility. The year of 1968 was the high point of these movements. They had acquired a theory drawing among other sources on the Frankfurt school and the works of Herbert Marcuse, based on the proposition that as the working classes of the West had lost their revolutionary vocation, it was for the peoples of the Third World – Frantz Fanon's 'Wretched of the Earth' – and for the marginalized in the West (immigrants, women, youth) to take up the baton. The integration of the Western working class into the system called for a revision of the theory of exploitation and the strategy of liberation. The reinterpretation by Wilhelm Reich called attention to the reproductive mechanisms of the domination/submission duality, seen as antecedent to the exploiter/exploited duality. With the loss of illusions about the Soviet system, a more sympathetic gaze was turned on Maoist China which seemed to have prefigured the events of 1968 two years earlier with the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution.

Then the crisis of the 1970s came and with it the end of the vista of boundless 'consumerism'. A new theme, not unrelated to the crisis, emerged: that of 'ecology' and the limited resources of the planet. By contrast, the end of the war in Indochina and the restoration of order in China put an end to the West's enthusiastic Third-Worldism; the struggles of the peoples of the Third World, entering a less dramatic phase, were not merely forgotten, but, by one of those typical shifts of opinion in the West, hostility took the place of the lost illusions. The intensification of the arms race among the superpowers, the vaunted aggressiveness of the new right in power in the United States were to bring another aspect of the movement to the fore on the European scene: anti-nuclear pacifism. Possibly the only movement to have sustained a degree of consistency over the two decades is the women's liberation movement. Its impact is also, in our view, more fundamental than that of the other currents

which inescapably wear the guise of a succession of 'fashions'.

It is difficult in these circumstances to treat these movements as an entity, as a homogeneous political current. In fact these movements are defined only in negative terms. To use the language of some of their ideologues, they are neither 'Blues' (by which they mean the forces of the classical right which find the capitalist system essentially satisfactory and retain efficiency of performance as the criterion by which to judge), nor 'Reds' (by which they mean the traditional forces of the labour movement in its diversity: social democratic and Soviet communist). According to the ideologues, Blues and Reds share the same fundamental views about the organization of society. They place themselves outside what they see as a narrow debate between the traditional right and traditional left. They are 'Greens', although the choice of this colour does not restrict the meaning of their movement to issues of ecology. The viewpoints expressed in what follows will be condemned in advance by 'Green cause' supporters as not being pertinent. Nevertheless, we shall try to consider as broad as possible a spectrum of Green opinion and will therefore draw on various coherent texts from ideologues of the movement, notably Johan Galtung, Mats Friberg and Björn Hettne, and Rudolf Bahro.[1]

The aim of the Greens is a society liberated from class exploitation and statist power whose members, equal, free of prejudice and various oppressions (of patriarchy, the family, etc.) can develop their full humanity without being constrained by scarcity, the impoverishing division of labour, etc.

The counter-system of the Greens is, properly speaking, abolition of exchange value and the state, and organization of society on the basis of direct production of use values. That at least is what Mats Friberg tells us explicitly. In reading his contribution, it is difficult to resist the temptation to scribble in the margin: 'This equals the communism of Marx'.

It should be said that if we have a prejudice in this critique, it is in favour of the Greens. It is very obvious that a community of aims puts us in the same camp. And that is certainly more important than the criticisms we may offer one another. On the other hand, although we deeply regret that the Greens – mistakenly – do not acknowledge that their counter-society is nothing other than the communism of Marx, it also true that our present age is in need of a reminder of this objective. For it is true that the traditional forces of the left, such as they are, have consigned this objective to the Greek kalends, if not simply renounced it, by categorizing it as 'utopian', or distorted it as in Soviet practice. Finally, the Greens have raised some new problems which, in some instances, were expressed only in embryonic form in Marxism. To pose them is not necessarily to go against Marxism but to enrich it.

The objective therefore is not new. Marxism itself did not invent anything. The revolt of the oppressed and exploited has in every age produced an ideology of a just, egalitarian and fraternal counter-system. Peasant communisms are not peculiar to this or that society; their essential elements are to be found in the history of all peoples. Utopian socialism transferred the objective of this society to the nascent industrial world, before Marx. And

neither utopian socialism nor the anarchism of Bakunin differ from Marxism in the objective, but on the means of achieving it. It is also true that social democracy and Soviet communism have distorted the historical significance of these strands, too quickly written off as 'peasant egalitarianism' (as if socialism should be the apologia *par excellence* of inequality!), 'petty bourgeois' or 'reactionary' utopia. Judgements made by Marx and Engels were taken out of context for the purpose.

The debate does not concern the character of the objective, but the theoretical character of its content. Peasant communisms of the past claimed to be a just interpretation of divine will: in the face of the Christianity of the 'church of the haves', the Islam of the Khalifal state, the Confucianism of the Empire, they claimed Christ, the Prophet Mohamed or Ali, the Taoist mystic, to re-establish justice on earth. From the 18th century, this theoretical justification gave way to an a-religious humanism. From Abbé Mably to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the assertion that the human being is naturally good and it is society that corrupts made it possible to suggest a path of liberation based on the reform of the individual. The utopians pursued this strategy in Fourier's phalanstery and other model societies.

Marx offered another kind of explanation, both of the character of the social order under consideration and of the 'counter-system' (an expression that Marx eschews). Marx's theses rely on an analysis of commodity and value and the opposition he derives between the mode of operation of pre-capitalist class orders (feudal among others) and that of the capitalist order. The fundamental concepts of historical materialism (modes of production, class, state, base and superstructure, etc.) were formulated in this analysis. This is not the place to offer any recapitulation of Marx's essential theses, of which there are various and often divergent interpretations. In any case our own has been published elsewhere.[2] Commodity alienation occupies a central place, which takes into account the character of the dominant ideology of the bourgeois system and the specificities of the base–superstructure relations characteristic of the system in contrast to previous modes. We confess we know of no richer or more scientifically based explanation of the capitalist society or of pre-capitalist societies.

This acknowledgement does not necessarily imply either that the entire issue of alienation can be reduced to that of commodity alienation (for the capitalist period) or a rejection of the existence of a form of human alienation that transcends society.

Some of Marx's writings may permit this reading. Starting from Feuerbach's critique of religion, Marx, while going further and replacing it with a critique of commodity fetishism, retains the progressive opinion of his time that there is no such thing as the transcendent. Scientific positivism of the 19th century believed strongly that nature could be dominated by man. But this domination can only be relative; the human being is still a living creature, a part of nature and as such finite and mortal. On this basis, questions that transcend his existence as a social being remain. Historical materialism does not answer these questions; it does not ask them; there is nothing to answer. The transforming

action of society does not imply this or require this. Such a position invites the reintegration in the field of social transformation of those believers who remain concerned with transcendental questions but who do not reduce human destiny to a passive reflection on these questions.[3] It is not a matter of political tactics but of fundamental belief. Furthermore, Marxism is not the radical extension of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which proposed to deal with social reality in the same way as nature, but a break with it. The vestiges of scientific positivism that he did display, and which have been strengthened with time, were not defended in the Second and Third International but on the contrary rooted out in the very name of Marxism.

So what do the Greens offer by way of a fundamental method for analysis of the social and human reality? A return to the 18th century dogma of the goodness of human nature and utopian socialism, an attempt at a theory of history in cultural terms as a substitute to analysis in terms of social forms of organization of production, and an occasional appeal to transcendental reflection. It remains to be seen whether what at first sight seems to be a return to pre-Marx is, under the conditions of today, really an enriching advance.

The assertion of a human nature independent of society, and pre-existing to it, that would itself be the logical condition for social existence, that such nature is good, that society is anti-natural and inimical to the development of this nature – an explicit assertion in Mats Friberg – does not call for confirmation or denial. The unfortunate feature of these theories of human nature is that they are undemonstrable since they transcend what is knowable – society. To prejudge that nature is good does not take us very far; it is enough to know that society is evil. In a paradoxical article, the Yugoslavian Svetozar Stojanovic,[4] starting from the 'pessimistic' hypothesis that human nature is bad, comes to the same conclusions: that society is evil. To pose the question in terms of human nature is, therefore, in our opinion, to ask a needless question, one that adds nothing to our knowledge of the world or our capacity to change it.

Moreover the Greens themselves are hardly satisfied with this response. They are obliged to categorize the society – or societies – against which they call for revolt. Marxism would call them 'capitalist'; they call them 'European'. Here we have the embryo of a culturalist theory of history. The Greens stress the 'utopia of a total mastery of nature' (Mats Friberg's own expression) that constitutes the driving force of 'our' civilization and is characteristic as much of socialist reality (the Soviet Union) as of capitalism. They explicitly attribute this utopia to European culture and its religious beliefs (Christianity). When it comes to understanding the world, in place of analysis in terms of pre-capitalist modes of production (feudal, tribute-paying, communal, etc.), expansion of capitalism on a world scale (with its central poles and peripheries), and 'revisionist' (to use the Maoist term) and 'socialist' supersessions, the key to understanding for the Greens is an analysis in terms of cultural areas of religious foundation: Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.

Unfortunately the germs of explanation offered by this approach do not constitute a satisfactory theory. Not because the cultural and religious factor is

not a social factor, and significant, but because this factor is not itself a-historic and a once-and-for-all given. For the culturalist explanation of history, historical materialism can substitute a historical theory of cultures.[5] Doubtless Marxism has not accomplished it – an impoverishing dogmatism has led it to deny certain social realities – but nothing in its method prevents it.

The Greens, through Friberg's contribution, offer the following typology: Christianity (together with Judaism and Islam), which makes man, as the reflection of God, master of nature; and other religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) which regard man as an integral part of nature. It is meagre, in so far as major ideologies are left out of the schema: overlooked are Confucianism (which is not a religion but a political morality), much more widespread than Buddhism in eastern Asia, the animisms of Africa and animist interpretations of nature (Taoism, the animist dimensions of Hinduism and animist practices in the peasant worlds including Islamic and Christian lands). It is also meagre in so far as the official dogma about divinity–humanity–nature relations is not a constant in the actual experience of the cultures in question. It is true that the Judaeo-Christian–Islamic conception of these relationships apparently proclaims the domination of nature by humanity. But surely this is an *a posteriori* reconstruction? On the basis of the store of Egyptian conceptions the religions in question have gradually emerged as they appear to us today. The dogmatic element is one among many; it has developed and taken its outstanding position along with capitalism, development of the forces of production that capitalism has allowed, conquest of other peoples, etc. Nothing leads us to believe that the European peasant, the monk and the feudal warrior of the 10th century, had this experience of Christian dogma. Religious faith is flexible; it embraces several dimensions and, according to circumstances, one or other is more to the fore. Otherwise it is impossible to understand why Islam, which shares this dogma with Christianity, did not open the way to an earlier capitalist development. We are back to the old debate about Weber's thesis: capitalism as a fruit of Protestantism, or Protestantism as a revision of Christianity in line with nascent capitalism? And going further, would not Confucianism have been the ideology *par excellence* of domination of nature and thus opened the way to capitalism? Finally, can Hinduism be reduced to its conception of humanity as an integral part of nature? What is the relationship of Hinduism to Indian reality as a whole, to the caste system for example?

The way in which the Greens pose the questions about cultures and religions is reminiscent of the Muslim fundamentalists of whom we offer a critique below.[6] For them too, expansion of capitalism – and of its apparent twin, 'existing socialism' – is not a product of the immanent laws of the capitalist mode, but only the expression of European expansion. And there is a kind of superficial truth: with capitalism born in Europe, its expansion into Asia and Africa is also that of Europe. This factor is not without significance in terms of its political effects, not only in the Orient, but also within Europe, obviously including effects on the forces of the left and in the labour movement. But does that justify not trying to see further than appearances – however plausible they are?

The store of concepts of historical materialism and above all its breadth as a method, and hence its capacity to integrate all aspects of social reality, are an invitation to us to enrich and not to abandon materialism. In our view, the alternative concepts proposed by the Greens are not an advance, but a retreat. The repeated use should be noted of such vague terms as 'modernization', 'individual', 'narrow group', etc., which do not have a constant value throughout history. In our view also, the false history of Europe to which the thesis of the Greens leads is unfair even with regard to Europe. To say, as Mats Friberg writes, that bourgeois development has reduced the role of individuals, is to overlook the positive, albeit limited, character of bourgeois liberation of the individual, and to deny the reality of feudal oppression of the latter.

What appear to us as weaknesses in the theory of the society entails comparable weaknesses in the strategy proposed for changing society.

But do not the Greens make the task a little too easy in acknowledging two strategies – the Blue and the Red – that are in reality only one, and thereby exclude from their examination a socialist alternative different from that whose existence they recognize?

The Blues are doubtless by very definition satisfied with the system. But sometimes the same ideology is expressed in the language of Marxism. Thus Bill Warren, whom we have subjected to criticism in this work, [7] represents a currently significant and fashionable tendency in Western 'Marxism', according to which capitalist expansion into the underdeveloped countries is a reasonable way towards solving the problems of underdevelopment, since capitalism's development of the forces of production necessarily operates to the benefit of the mass of the people. But this reduction of the social problem to development of the forces of production is not general in the camp of the Reds. Doubtless certain social-democratic currents have succumbed to it but the overall negative assessment made by the Greens is once again unfair: the redistribution measures, social security and decentralization cannot be reduced to their 'bureaucratic' aspect. Doubtless too, the Soviet conception of Marxism is close to the view of a 'capitalism without capitalists'. But it is unfair to Marxism to reduce it to Soviet practice. Marx himself had another view, we believe, both of communism and of the transition to socialism, witness his comments on the Gotha and Erfurt programmes.

Maoism is an alternative treated too lightly by the Greens. Moreover, many of the themes that sustain the Green movements have their origin in Maoism, as the Greens recognize: self-reliance, decentralization, a critique of technology regarded as non-neutral, delinking, etc. According to Mao himself, and rightly so, it is not a matter of new inventions but of a return to Marx distorted by revisionism. However, Maoism has brought these principles into play under circumstances that cannot be dissociated from the analysis as they concern genuine problems: development of the forces of production is not an absurd luxury here, the 'transition' in a world system where the dominant forces remain hostile, etc. The contradiction is not removable because it is there in life: self-reliance also requires a strong state, albeit of the people and decentralized,

etc. In wanting the 'good side' of Maoism without its 'bad side', do not the Greens remind us of Proudhon whom Marx, rightly in our opinion, criticized on this level, for his lack of any sense of dialectic?

The strategy of the Greens starts from their theoretical premisses: evil, that is European culture, and the means to fight it, the immediate establishment of partial systems that will enable us to liberate ourselves from it. But here the balance sheet of achievements, their extent and prospects, leaves us in doubt. For instance, is not praise for 'small groups' ill-considered and in contradiction with the reality of 'family as source of a good many evils'? For instance, does praise for decentralization take account of historical experience: that all the great progressive changes in history have been effected by centralizing social forces, that decentralization often strengthens the conservative power wielded by local notables and contributes to depoliticization (consider Switzerland and the United States)? Why should communities and other formulae of the phalanstery kind have a greater chance of success today than hitherto? A. G. Frank has offered a felicitous formula to encapsulate the essence of the position: 'The Greens are saying: Stop the system, I want to get off.'

Doubtless the fairly negative judgements proffered here might seem unfair. In fact the Greens do not constitute an organized and homogeneous movement and the grouping under the same heading of movements of varying character and scale is unwarranted. This excessively wide discussion should be replaced with a series of case studies which would lead more often than might be expected to a convergence of political attitudes. For example, the European anti-nuclear peace movement should be judged concretely, in the light of the political and military conjuncture of the moment. The Greens often also support struggles of resistance to capitalist expansion, notably peasant struggles. These are progressive since the criterion of forces of progress is opposition to capitalist accumulation (are not wage rises in conflict with the immediate demands of accumulation?), rather than accepting it in the name of progress of the forces of production, forgetting, like Bill Warren, their capitalist character. It matters little therefore that the populist motivation (Mats Friberg makes an explicit reference to the example of the Russian Narodniks) does not convince everybody. For us, for example, the peasant resistance to capitalist expansion – it is a major social factor in the Third World – retains a dual character: both anti-capitalist – since capitalism in its concrete operation here is in conflict with peasant interests – but also the expression of another possible capitalist path based on peasant revolution. In the current historical circumstances, this resistance must be supported since it could become a decisive element of the anti-capitalist popular alliance opening the way to a transition to socialism. Many examples could be given of convergence of partial strategies despite theoretical differences as to their meaning and their place in the overall scheme. The most crucial area of this deep-rooted convergence is certainly that of the women's liberation movement(s), which cannot be subsumed in the logic of the Greens any more than in any other. For there are women's movements perfectly compatible with capitalist logic, while others subscribe to socialism, in its broadest sense ranging from social-

democratic reformism to Maoism. No strategy comes with a guarantee as to its outcome, above all one as ambitious as the radical transformation of society. Mats Friberg reminds us of the reality of the threatened apocalypse with an image of a torrent rushing us towards the falls. But is it reasonable to expect to swim against the current with a purely voluntarist statement such as that of Mats Friberg writing that 'the will of the actors can fashion the world in conformity with their wishes regardless of the system' (p. 83)? The choice is not between swimming with the current or against the current. The question is how to go against the current? Marxism does not argue that the apocalypse is a rigorous impossibility since it believes that in the absence of socialism, barbarism will deal with problems in its way.

The appearance of the currents bearing the Green label is no surprise to us. It is a manifestation of the failure of the strategies applied by the European left over several decades. It therefore calls for serious self-criticism and represents a positive phenomenon. In just the same way, in the Third World, the appearance of currents of fundamentalist renewal, such as that of Islam, is explained by the failure of the revisionist strategies of support for the national bourgeoisie in the name of national liberation, replacing the popular and Maoist strategies of national liberation under the banner of socialism and the autonomous leadership of the exploited classes. This, too, is a fact that calls for self-criticism.

Moreover, reactions in the two cases present striking similarities. As with Islamic fundamentalism, the Greens are within a renewal of the religious spirit. It is not by chance that their successes are almost exclusively within the milieu of Northern Europe, characterized by the tradition of Protestantism. The explicit comparisons made – by Galtung and Bahro for example – with the response of primitive Christianity to the crisis of the Roman Empire are available to strengthen this ideological stamp. We have already discussed this point of view.[8] We do not exclude the transition – however uncertain its effects – by the form that we have described as a process of decadence in contrast to the so-called revolutionary form – significantly less uncertain in its effects.

The appearance of the Green currents and other forms of religious fundamentalism seem to us, in this sense, not a solution to the crisis, but one of its symptoms.

Notes

1. Friberg, Mats and Hettne, Björn, *The Greening of the World. Towards a non deterministic model of global process*, UNU-Tokyo, 1985; Bahro, Rudolf, *Who can stop the Apocalypse?* WFSF, Stockholm, 1982, mimeo; and various works of Johan Galtung.
2. See *Class and Nation*, chapter 1.
3. See for example Houtart, François, *Religion et modes de production précapitalistes*, Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980.

4. Stojanovic, Svetozar, *Reflexions on the Crisis of Marxist View of Power*, WFSF, Stockholm, 1982, mimeo.

5. Expression used by George Aseniero in the course of oral discussion (UNU Symposium, 1984).

6. 'Is there a political economy of Islamic fundamentalism?', Chapter 6 below. See also the work (in Arabic) of Al-Daiyiqah Hasan, *On Samir Amin and the Methodological Problems of Marxist Historians*; and our critique (in Arabic).

7. 'Expansion or crisis of capitalism?', Chapter 3 above.

8. In the conclusion to *Class and Nation*, under the heading 'Revolution or Decadence?'; see also *Review* 4, 1, Summer 1980, New York.

6. Is There a Political Economy of Islamic Fundamentalism?

Fundamentalism or rationalism: two approaches to the history of societies

Ideologies are the fruit of given historical situations. They appear as systems of response to the problems posed by the societies in question when they are in crisis. They provide the momentum for the crystallization of a bloc of social forces capable of offering a way out of the society's crisis. That is why the new, rising, social forces that designate the aim of changing the social order often – though not always – prove able to formulate their vision of the future in a plan of society defined in terms whose coherence is ensured by the ideology that binds them. To the ideology of (revolutionary or sometimes reformist) change in the rising forces, the powers that be, defenders of the status quo, can oppose only an ageing and unconvincing ideology, pragmatism and repression. The rising forces generally win, society is changed, a new order established, in accordance with the revolutionary plan whose ideology becomes the new system of reference values. The new contradictions disguised in the phase of battle against the old order appear and the ideology, becoming the authority, is reinterpreted to hold off the eruption. The revolution is always, in this sense, 'betrayed'. And history goes on its way until the moment when the ripening of these new contradictions erupts in a new crisis for the society.

The schema set out here describes in simple terms the attitude of rationalism to history. There is nothing sacred: everything changes and the change must be explained. It is not a confrontation of good and evil, but social forces with their own interests, strategies and visions. There may be argument about the character of the forces in question, of their plans, the degree to which they are conscious of the meaning of these plans. It is still a ground of confrontation where adversaries can understand one another. Rationalism will try to deal in this way with all social factors, including religious movements.

The fundamentalist state of mind looks at history from the standpoint of another language. A particular view of society is put forward, that is endowed with the virtues of being able to resolve once and for all the problems of society and humankind. To reject this view is to opt for evil against good. History is regarded as the locus of this confrontation. All ideologies for change, when they appear and organize themselves in physical battle lines, have within a

tendency to express themselves in fundamentalist terms. It is always the case, by definition, for religious movements, with problems of the social order and humankind and the natural order finding their answer in an overall construct that brings them together. But it is also the case in movements that do not purport to be religious. The philosophy of the Enlightenment of the rising bourgeoisie in Europe put forward a coherent scheme with appropriate places for: positivism of the natural sciences, social science based on an analogous positivism (society being the object of observation and subjected, as in nature, to laws of development, independently of human will), a reduction of the human being to an egoistical individual, a hypothesis consistent with the requirements of the operation of society seen as a machine forged by the conflict of these egoisms. The step towards formulation in terms of a new religion is sometimes taken explicitly, as when the National Convention in French history established the Cult of Reason and of the Supreme Being.

It is easy today to show the close relationship between this view of the world and the objective requirements of the capitalist mode of production. Marx did so. But here again the negative momentum of a mere critique of ideology was not enough to ask of history. Marxism, as an ideology of battle against the capitalist order, was bound to evolve in the same fundamentalist direction. A reconciliation is put forward, offering a new synthesis of nature, society and humankind, around the laws of dialectical materialism, regarded as the first principles. The 'diamat' is expressed as a kind of new cosmogony, related to that of reason, and likewise making science take the place of providence as the driving force of history.

Despite their common tendency towards the absolute and complete, the religious ideologies differ from the others. The prolonged historical resistance by religions which have been able to withstand social change shows their flexibility. This capacity to outlive the historical circumstances of their birth makes it impossible to speak of 'Christianity' or 'Islam', as Christians or Muslims do. As social phenomena there are Christianities, Islams, which have been a living reality to Christians and Muslims of various times and places. Divergent interpretations of observances, sects and schisms, *de facto* differences of attitude to the role accorded to the fundamental value system in social life, all bear witness to this. The fundamentalists are aware of this malleability, but reject it: the betrayal of principles worries them more than an explanation of the malleability. But the survival of religions also shows that they offer not only concrete social solutions, but also an interpretation of human nature in its relation to nature (or in their own language, to divinity). This problematic goes beyond the social systems to which the religions are linked at their birth, as it goes beyond the successive social systems to which they adapt.

The modern non-religious ideologies – the philosophies of the Enlightenment and Marxism – by refusing to acknowledge the autonomy of this latter dimension of the problematic of religion, believed themselves capable of 'liberating' humankind from belief in the divine. The philosophy of the Enlightenment thus generated a scientific positivist response which was

unsatisfactory as it was not even on the same footing as the question posed – that of human nature. It made possible a relativistic approach to the religions by making some sense of their history; it made it possible to convince people that religions transmitted superstitions and myths engendered by the human mind; but it has not answered those questions it is impossible to answer without leaving the realm of natural sciences and scientific analysis of society. Marxism has often inherited this approach and adopted it a scientific positivism on its own account, although it has criticized this position. It is in no way obligatory to accept this expansion of 'cosmogony', and there is the option of remaining within the limited realm of historical materialism, refusing to integrate this into a philosophical discourse on the universe.

The ideologies that have become state powers necessarily degenerate in comparison with what they seemed to be when they were constituted. The degeneration usually takes the form of a combination of pragmatism and ritualized formal dogmatism. The philosophy of the Enlightenment in the capitalist West, and Soviet Marxism, have undergone this evolution. This is particularly obvious at periods when the social systems feel strong, well entrenched, unchallenged. But when a challenge to the social order comes, then the potentially fundamentalist dimension, that was always latent, is revealed. The thinking of President Reagan thus re-emerged, in response to a threat against American hegemony, as a religious fundamentalism, identical in every way to that of others, that of the Ayatollah Khomeini for example. The American Constitution, two centuries old, constitutes, as the Koran does elsewhere, the revealed answer to all the problems of humankind today and for all time. In addition, the questions posed below to Muslim fundamentalism (How does it interpret history? Does it include a political economic? Is it a choice among others to the questions facing present-day societies? How can its emergence be explained?) can be asked in the same terms of other fundamentalisms (that of the United States of Reagan for example). The answers will be the same.

The fundamentalists' interpretation of history

The fundamentalists are not primarily interested in knowing why things have been and are what they are. What interests them more is to know how things have moved away from principles. They apply this method with much vigour if not rigour when they examine their own history, that of the Muslim world in this instance. By contrast, when they venture on the history of others, the history of Christianity and Europe for example, they are no longer impelled by a concern to distinguish the moments and attitudes that accord with their principles from those that betray them, and they seem more open to reason in understanding the evolution. But this other history is of little interest to them, since it has nothing to teach them; they are concerned only to the extent that Europe has had an impact on their own lives, by imposing its universal order through its imperialism.

An examination of the view of the past held by the fundamentalists is essential for anyone who seeks to understand how they pose the questions of today and how they articulate their responses into a plan whose feasibility can then be considered.

We do not have much of an embarrassment of choice in attempting this exercise of decoding. The fundamentalists write a great deal, on every topic, and proclaim even more, but rarely offer a coherent overall work. But there is an overall theoretical formulation at the origin of this school of thought. It was virtually the work of one man – Sayed Qotb, almost the sole ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. His main work – *Social Justice in Islam* (*Al Adala Al Ijtimaia fil Islam*) – published by Dar el Maaref in Cairo in 1949, and constantly reprinted since then, contains the entire historical vision, dogma and justifications of the programme that have sustained the fundamentalism of today. The thinker, who was executed for participating in a Muslim Brothers attempt to assassinate President Gamal Abdel Nasser, remains unparalleled. The recordings of Ayatollah Khomeini, the long educational talks that the Arab television stations, from Morocco to the Gulf, offer their viewers, the religious education propagated by the militants, the endless range of books and pamphlets shelved in bookshops under the Islamiyat label, have added nothing to the master's thinking. Usually the public is offered diluted, inferior and confused versions of that thinking. Moreover, at least half of the work cited has been allowed to fall into oblivion: it is precisely that part dealing with Muslim history and the history of the West. The dogmatic chapters dealing with justice and power in Islam are by contrast more or less faithfully reproduced. The references to which we direct the reader's attention here are taken from this work in its original Arabic version.[1]

According to Qotb the history of fourteen centuries of the Muslim peoples is little more than the history of their betrayal of principles. On page 185 the declaration is specific: a mere thirty years after the death of the Prophet began the long series of usurpations and betrayals, which from the Khalifs Omar and Osman to the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties established a 'non-Muslim' regime, despite appearances to the contrary.

Perfection and the genuinely Muslim model of social and personal life are to be found at the origins, during the life of the Prophet.

'Human liberation' is the source of this success: rejection of polytheism, the assertion that the human being must submit to no other force than that of Allah (p. 36), which means freedom from fear, since 'no creature can curtail a human life by a single instant', equality of men as creatures of God, among whom no individual can be privileged by ancestry, a real equality (with no exception for the Prophet himself, or his descendants, or tribe . . .), or mythical (as the caste system proposes by attributing inequality to those of different ancestry . . . , p. 50).

This liberation enables us to postulate a political authority that emanates from the Muslim community and this alone, without the intermediary of a church or an imam holding rights other than those of the community itself (p. 16). Moreover, this imam does not really rule, he is content to apply the law

that emanates from God, since this law (Shari'a) positively governs all aspects of social life (family: marriage, succession, inheritance; power: its means, fiscal, etc; the economy: property, contracts, etc.). Doubtless the law must be interpreted and adapted to changing reality, and that is why a 'government' is needed. But as the principles have already been enunciated, the government has to do no more than 'administer'. In this view Islam, as Qotb states explicitly (from the first pages – it is the first assertion, repeated on p. 89), is not only belief and religious faith but also social order, as the two are inseparable, and the concept of separation of religion and civil society is unknown to Islam. The principles of Muslim government, charged with applying a law that is already defined and not with drafting one, are very simple: a just government, and obedient governed (p. 96).

The basis of Muslim society is therefore equality of the faithful. It is, according to Qotb, a question of moral equality as creatures of God, not material equality (p. 30). For at the material level Islam respects the legitimate aspirations to enjoyment, rejecting the sacrifice of the goods of this world (that Christianity regards as the ideal model [p. 35]!). To ensure the satisfaction of these aspirations Islam recognizes private property, and even regulates economic relations (*Al muamalat*), that is, Islam makes decrees on the laws of exchange (p. 34). We shall see later how this economic life is regulated and what kinds of limitations Islam imposes to prevent abuse. At this stage it is enough to say that its concept of social justice is distributive: 'the right of the poor to a portion of the wealth of the rich' (p. 18).

Moral equality includes that of the genders, and of the Dhimmi peoples (subjected Christians and Jews) and even of pagans with whom the Muslim community has made alliance (p. 13). As for women the justification for their unequal treatment is well-known, and repeated by Qotb: man has the duty of maintaining the family (hence his double share in inheritance), woman is too emotional for her testimony to be as reliable as that of man (pp. 54–55). The tautological character of the argument is not perceived.

We apologize to those readers who are already familiar with this classical presentation of Islamic state and society by Islam's own ideologues. It has, perhaps, the advantage of bringing out the banality of the argument. In regard to moral and religious principles nothing specifically different from, for example, Christian principles (monotheism, distributive justice, moral equality of all creatures, inferiority of women). The same contradictions and the same ambiguities are to be found. Here as elsewhere the omnipotence of God may encourage fatalism, although that is not a strict necessity from which society cannot escape. But Muslim societies, like Christian counterparts, have known fatalist interpretations, just as they have gone through periods of active voluntarism, according to factors far beyond the possible divergent interpretations of a text that remains ambiguous.

Distributive justice does not exclude on the one hand the revolutionary demand by the oppressed for a radical redivision, nor on the other hand a conservative interpretation of acceptance of the status quo. A Koranic sura, cited by Qotb himself (p. 44) permits this interpretation: 'Beware of envying

the rich, for the reward in the hereafter is greater' . . . The later history of Muslim societies, as of Christian Europe, was to know both popular risings (in the former, Qarmatian communist millenarianisms, or in the latter, the Albigensian sect) and conservative statist interpretations. The proclamation of moral equality would not prevent *de facto* inequality. The assertion that nobody has particular rights by virtue of ancestry was denied in fact by the practice and behaviour of real or mythical descendants of the Prophet (the Shurafa in this or that instance) or his tribe (the Quureishi). Islam has been no more able than Christianity to prevent inequality of status (slavery for example), and *a fortiori* the inequality and even despotism of princes and the rich . . .

The fundamentalist argument itself never goes beyond a paraphrase of the moral justifications for the solutions adopted. An explanation of the latter in scientific terms remains foreign to it. Very typical in this respect is the kind of justification of the position of women.

It may then be asked in what way the society of the epoch of the Prophet constitutes a perfect achievement. The reply comes in the form of contrast from the critique directed by the fundamentalists at the subsequent epochs: since the period of the Khalifs Omar and Osman these have been marked by the accentuation of material inequality, the appropriation of land and wealth for the benefit of a minority who monopolize and abuse power. This criticism recurs in Qotb to a striking degree (pp. 22, 92, 107–108, 115, and 145–260, particularly pp. 185, 194, 204, 227–9, etc.). But, as we shall see, the 'deviation' is never explained, merely noted. The question remains unanswered: could Islam have avoided the evolution it has undergone? Could the small, relatively poor community, organized first as a sect at Mecca then as a city-state at Medina, have preserved its real mode of organization once the opulent Byzantine and Sassanian Orient was integrated into a great state?

The rest of the history of the Muslim peoples is, according to the fundamentalists, no more than a sorry tale of betrayal of principles. The condemnation is total, without nuances or exceptions. With the Abbasid dynasty, divine power, in contradiction with the essence of Islam, is re-established: 'People, I am the representative of God on earth' (cited by Qotb, p. 204). But Muslim society was already corrupt long before that. The Khalifs Omar and Osman distributed the wealth of the community to an allied clientele, and when the Khalif Ali tried to put the situation right it was already too late: the power of Beni Ummaya was already established through mastery of Syria and the Ummayad *coup d'état* inevitable (numerous citations from Qotb, pp. 115, 179, 185, 194). At a stroke, all the history of the following fourteen centuries is nothing but shame. Philosophical debates are impious, and condemnation covers all Arabo-Muslim philosophy (namely Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rochd, etc., pp. 22 and 252). The Koran is the only source of philosophy, reflection on the basis of Greek philosophy is condemned, and there is vilification of the interpretations by the Arab liberal bourgeoisie who wanted to revive the reputation of the 'centuries of Muslim enlightenment' (Mohamed Heykal, Taha Husayn, the Nahda of the 19th century and the

Muslim reformers, the efforts at opening up by the Azhar etc., are treated as manifestations of betrayal). *A fortiori*, it is easy to imagine how the fundamentalists regard the attempts at a reinterpretation of the 'heritage', that is of this philosophy, in terms of struggles between progressive ideas and those of conservative mysticism (the attempts of Hussein Merowe or of Tayeb el-Tizini for example). Obviously the condemnation gives new value to the obscurantist periods.

But the violence of the condemnations is such that it is untenable: are not fourteen centuries of lies, betrayal and shame heart-breaking? The text is therefore scattered with qualifications expressed in general terms, without historical reality, and in total contradiction with the thesis of betrayal. Islam, a friend to science (since it proves the existence of God, p. 17) has 'never known the persecution of men of science as in Europe' (p. 16)! The conquered provinces – since Islam in its dogma has no place for inequality of the faithful – were never treated as such: Mohamed Heykal, who tries to give an account of the history of the Arabo-Muslim state, is wrong to be concerned with reality, as only dogma counts (p. 91)! The *dhimmi* have always been treated with tolerance (p. 93)! The obvious fact that Islam, like any other religion, can very well be interpreted in terms of either tolerance or intolerance, and this has been the historical fact, is of no interest to the fundamentalists.

How then explain the social – and ideological – change characteristic of the history of the Muslim world from the outset? A liberal – and believing – thinker, such as Taha Husayn, cannot evade the question: he treats it openly in his consideration of 'the great schism of Osman' (cited explicitly by Qotb, p. 92). The empirical observation of Taha Husayn – that the Muslim state has become a conquering Arab state – is regarded as unacceptable. The explanation lies then in pure chance, which could have been avoided (and so could be corrected). The Prophet himself did not appoint any Khalif, out of respect for the community (p. 179); so the community chose from the incompetent and corrupt, especially Osman (p. 185); when Ali came, it was too late (p. 194). And explicitly, p. 227: 'The [Ummayad] *coup d'état* which changed the nature of power [from Islamic to non-Islamic] was the result of an unfortunate chance; if Ali had arrived sooner, the whole history [of Islam and of humankind] would have been different.' The repeated failure of Ali's supporters and their later evolution does not concern Qotb. As we shall see later, the fundamentalist method of analysis, its way of understanding the history of the Muslim peoples dealt with here, and its view of the history of other peoples and of contemporary problems will directly govern the character of its answers to the only question it is interested in: how to re-establish Muslim order?

Is there a political economy of fundamentalism?

The fundamentalists offer in this realm a Koranic exegesis that is well-known but whose conclusions are worth recalling.

Islam governs in effect the fields of ownership and circulation of wealth just as it governs those of the financial organization of the community.

Qotb recapitulates the principles on which these regulations of economic life are based, as:

a) Respect for private property, justified by human nature (p. 104), from which is derived, in combination with organization of the family, recognition and regulation of inheritance.

b) Respect for the interests of the community that implies 'non-abusive' use of property (land that is not put to good use must revert to the community . . . , pp. 107 and 112), as it implies circulation of wealth and not its 'appropriation' by a small group (p. 108), and hence among other things a 'prohibition of monopoly' (p. 116). The interests of the community likewise justify the existence of inappropriable public goods ('fire and water' . . . p. 111), and the obligation to maintain the destitute (a society that allows some of its members to die of hunger is not worthy of the name of Muslim . . . p. 116).

c) The organization of juridical rules ensuring equality in the exchange and circulation of wealth. Muslim law draws up for the purpose a veritable code of obligations and goes into detail (validity and invalidity of contracts . . .). It is for this reason that it forbids interest on loans (since 'money cannot beget money' . . . p. 122).

d) The organization of wage relations: labour, the principal source of property (land use, trade) may be remunerated (p. 114). The employee has duties, above all that of providing properly what is required of him (p. 115). The employer has a duty to take account of the employee's needs in determining the wage rate, and for this purpose a minimum may be enjoined upon him by the community.

e) The organization of financial rules to ensure that communal expenses are covered: the imposition of *zakat* for Muslims, of *djizia* for subjected non-Muslim communities, definition of the rates of taxation and the purposes of public expenditure.

Once again there is nothing out of the ordinary here. Justification of these principles and rules by paraphrasing the texts that establish them, a favourite exercise of the fundamentalists, does not take us far in understanding their rationale.

By contrast, a scientific examination of the social reality of time and place brings out the real character and function of these rules. For example the prohibition on loans for interest, a feature shared, it should be remembered, with other pre-capitalist societies. For example the concern to regulate contracts in a society strongly characterized by mercantile relations (the Muslim law of obligations is close to the laws of many other mercantile societies).

These commonplace forms may, according to temperament and the needs of the case, be extrapolated in any direction without any real relation to the reality of the society for which they have been formulated.

It is, for example, possible to stress their archaic character and in a literal, or restrictive, interpretation, conclude that they cannot be adapted to our world.

The five recognized areas of public expenditure, the prohibition on interest, the rules for division of inheritance (unless there is the desire to fix the forms of family life, which might be the case since they are sacred . . .) provide good arguments for the traditionalists most closed to any idea of change. History, however, is always ready to give the lie to any suggestion of finding fixity in the immutable. Even in the thorniest area of inheritance, the invention of the *wakfs* religious trusts (impious for a fundamentalist), and today the recourse to stratagems to evade the law (to which even the most faithful resort) bear witness to the impossibility of finding fixity in the immutable.

It is also possible to derive from this body of rules a general spirit that defines a relatively conservative morality. It is, moreover, the prevailing real historical interpretation to which Muslim law has been subject, notably by the powers that be. This interpretation does not exclude the justification of reformist measures that may be called for by circumstances and evolution. As it happens it is the Qotb's own interpretation when he defines his political programme (p. 224) with three aims: redistribution of property (agrarian reform?); nationalization of services of public interest (still to be defined); minimum wage.

It is certainly possible to defend such a programme, especially in the Egypt of 1949. There is no contradiction here with the principles of Islam. But then it must be agreed that there is nothing specific in this conservative or reformist morality. It is no different from what inspires Christianity for example. Its formulation in terms of revealed truth – the revelation of the Koran or the Gospels – might make it more convincing to believers. That does not give it a specific content, different for example from the civic morality of Confucianism.

But the interpretation may be pushed so far as to admit the most radical social change. That happened in history, on the occasion of revolts by the oppressed (Qarmatian and others) calling for equal division, or for the abolition of slavery, etc. Nothing in the text would, according to some, prevent today the socialist organization of production (public ownership and workers' control, etc.).

Other historical interpretations of (effective or mythical) Islamic 'law' or 'reality' have been offered. Limitations on private property, which are no different from those of many other societies (and even of feudal Europe!) and which seem to us rather attractive today, have been considered, at the time of the birth of capitalism, as a handicap to progress. Does not Bernier attribute 'oriental despotism' – precisely to the Muslim region (Turks, Persians and Mongols) – and the stagnation of the Orient to public property (*miri*), to the denial of inalienable rights to private property . . . ? Marx himself was sensitive to this argument, which has subsequently given rise to the thesis of the 'Asiatic mode of production'.

It is difficult in these circumstances to find any satisfaction in a unilateral correlation between Islam and feudalism or capitalism or socialism. Just as it is difficult to establish a necessary connection between Christianity and feudalism or capitalism or socialism. Islam, like Christianity, can adapt itself widely, and is even readier to justify itself. Is not an Islamic (or Christian)

capitalism (or socialism) rather a faded equation?

Is it then possible to speak of a political economy of Islam? Certainly not, neither in the past, nor in the present, nor in the future. There was an economic organization for the Muslim community of the Prophet, there was a series of (differing) forms of economic organization for Muslim states from the 7th to the 19th century, there is an economic organization for our world (that of worldwide capitalism), into which the Muslim countries have been integrated for quite some time. These countries are facing problems posed by this integration and the problems are new. To respond by principles as general and flexible as those to be deduced from exegesis of texts that establish the economic organization of Arabia fourteen centuries ago, is no answer at all. But the flexibility of the response is precisely the strength of fundamentalism. It can bring together very diverse social forces, whose interests are not necessarily convergent, in an overall 'rejection', whose origin and significance we shall see later.

The fundamentalist renaissance in the face of the options of our time

It seems realistic to start from the bald observation that capitalist development and imperialist conquest have created the situation we are experiencing. Like it or not, the problems facing us are those engendered by this development. In this framework we see a first set of questions that confront all the societies on earth: capitalism or socialism? acceptance of a class society founded on private ownership (or that of a non-popular state) of the modern means of production or the prospect of social ownership and the abolition of class? In addition, the imperialist form of capitalist expansion poses a second set of questions for our Third World societies: national construction or transnationalization? do we regard as necessary and ineluctable the building of socialism within the framework of liberated nations asserting themselves and delinking from the world system as it is, or do we regard transnationalization as inevitable and the capitalism–socialism struggle as belonging in this immediate framework? This is not the place to repeat the point of view that we have explained earlier. We need merely say that our analysis leads us to consider that the social forces of the Third World, according to their (explicit or implicit) immediately available choices, can be classified into the following three categories:

1) Those who accept capitalism and transnationalization. By this token the social forces bear within themselves a plan for society that is hard to admit openly: maximization of the consumption of a minority, even at the price of a sacrifice of the material interests of the masses and of national and cultural values. These forces are the majority of the powers currently holding sway in the Third World.

2) Those who opt for socialism and national construction. These forces exist, and are torn by internal debates that bear precisely on the character of the objective (What is socialism? What is national autonomy?) and on the strategies to embark upon in order to attain it.

3) Those who argue that national construction is the sole objective necessary for our societies and that it is relatively independent of the option of capitalism or socialism. We argue that this choice in fact conceals a capitalist option – albeit by the state – and that as a result the plan for national autonomy is impossible.

The fundamentalists evidently reject this way of posing the questions. They believe that the choice before the Muslim societies is: an Islamic society or a non-Islamic society? But if there is no political economy of fundamentalism, it means there is not 'one' Islamic response to any of the questions life poses to our societies. There are always various, differing, responses, that may well be justifiable in terms of compatibility with the dogmas of Islam. That is why the fundamentalists are destined to recruit across the widest spectrum of political attitudes: from the right to the left. That is why they are destined to tear themselves apart, as can be seen in Iran and elsewhere.

Fundamentalism is ill-placed to understand why it is incapable of forming an unambiguous social plan.

Rationalism or fundamentalism constitute two states of mind irreducible to one another, incapable of integration, almost without the possibility of dialogue at the level of principles of analysis (although dialogue at the level of political actions is always possible and desirable). This irreducibility becomes clear when we examine how fundamentalism classifies the Islamic society and the 'modern' (that is, non-Islamic) world.

Islam, according to Qotb, and along with him all the fundamentalists, is different and specific since it does not separate the religious (faith) from the social (organization of power, family, economic life). The assertion is repeated all the way through the work cited. From page 12 this unity is 'explained' by the fact that 'Islam was formed in a primitive society where it had to ensure the moral and material reconstruction, and was thus obliged not only to win souls but to organize social life'. This assertion is repeated in dogmatic terms, p. 89: 'the [Islamic] religion is a unity of faith and social rules'.

This unity was certainly a fact at the time of the birth of Islam. Islam was certainly an option (among other possibilities) and was chosen by the Arab society of the 7th century, facing its own problems. The unity has certainly been maintained subsequently in the Muslim world; although, if the faith has changed little, the social life associated with it has undergone giant transformations.

But is that something specific and unique? The European societies of the Middle Ages and the *ancien régime* also believed that they were 'Christian' in the sense that they could not imagine a separation between their religious faith and the forms of their social life. The faith itself was, in our opinion, little different from that of Islam, or at least the differences separating them do not explain the differences separating the social lives of Muslim societies (through the ages) from those of Christian societies (likewise through the ages). The principles associated with each of these two faiths to regulate social life are equally flexible and have demonstrated this through their adaptation to social change. There is perhaps one exception here, to which we shall return, the area of the family.

The society of imperial China also thought it unimaginable to separate its civil organization from Confucian ideology. And if it has been possible to rebuild India as a unified modern state, is it not the bond of Hinduism that has largely determined the consciousness of the necessity to do so?

Fundamentalism postulates the Islamic society–non-Islamic society opposition as an absolute. By this token, it prevents itself understanding what the non-Islamic societies are, as evidently they cannot be reduced to a single unity through time and space. In particular to define 'modern society' as merely 'non-Islamic' makes it impossible to understand what it is.

'Modern' civilization (and Qotb here confuses capitalism and socialism) is the fruit of the 'non-Islamic'. How did the 'non-Islamic' beget the modern world? Qotb defines 'modern' society as a 'materialist' society (in the vulgar sense of the term) that ignores the spiritual. Although this judgement is in our view superficial and erroneous, it is certainly shared by many, including Christians and Buddhists for example. To ignore the bourgeois and socialist humanisms, fruits of the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the socialist movement respectively, to ignore the values of human liberty and so many other valuable creations of the 'modern' world, and reduce it all to the search for the material, is rather inadequate. However, according to Qotb, this impoverishment does not come from Christianity but from the 'Roman' spirit. On page 224, this is asserted: utilitarianism is Roman, not Christian in origin. Once again this view of Rome (and of Greece) is rather inadequate. If Christianity, despite its spirituality, has been unable to overcome this utilitarianism, it is supposedly for two reasons that in fact boil down to one. On the one hand Christianity is an 'individual', not a 'social' religion (p. 299: Christianity is not a force that can stand up to utilitarianism since it is an individualist religion that does not concern itself with the organization of society). A modern Protestant might perhaps subscribe to this interpretation of what Christianity must be, but the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages would not recognize itself there. On the other hand this 'individualist' character goes back to the beginnings. This is a repeated thesis of fundamentalism which Qotb formulates in clear terms on pages 6 and 7: Christianity, born into a highly organized State (the Roman Empire), was exclusively concerned with moral regeneration, leaving social organization untouched, whereas Islam, born into a primitive society, had to be concerned with regulating the moral life of the soul and social life. Once again this view of the religion–society relationship is erroneous; and Christianity, like Islam, has constituted the basis of social organization of Europe throughout centuries. Doubtless the forms of the relationship in question have been peculiar to each case. But the principle is identical. Qotb's argument is on a related question: why is there a Christian church and not a Muslim church? This might be thought to be a question of the organizational form of the religion–society relationship, and nothing more. But for Qotb, it is a fundamental difference that proves the 'non-social' character of Christianity. As the latter was exclusively concerned with souls, and the state was left untouched, Christianity, in order to counter-balance the force of the state in question (in Rome? among the Barbarians?), had to

organize on its own ground, that is as a financial and military force (p. 10). In fact the church, at the start, was emphatically a ('non-governmental' and even 'anti-governmental') civil organization, whose members thereby expressed their determination to regulate social issues in accordance with their religious faith.

The 'modern' world is certainly different from the 'Christian' world of the Middle Ages. But Qotb cannot see this, since he defines both as 'utilitarian-Roman'. That is why his concept of 'modern science' is so paltry. On page 249 and subsequently, after appealing for liberation from the 'Western spirit' (p. 248), he defines this spirit as one of 'pure science that denies the divine'. The 'pure' science in question is reduced to a few superficial odds and ends of the worst empirical psychology – American behaviourism. What is more, this spirit, thus reduced to utilitarianism of that kind of American philosophy, is common to 'capitalism' and to 'socialism', since both are 'European' (p. 299). The distance separating Marxist humanism and American behaviourism escapes our philosopher.

It is Islam's task therefore to save humankind, precisely by opposing this capitalist and socialist 'utilitarianism'. The fundamentalists, taking this position, are obliged to deny any social reality other than the religious. One is a Muslim or one is not. Among other things national reality disappears from the analysis. Very explicitly Qotb speaks only of the 'Islamic community' (*Al umma*). He engages with Mohamed Heykal (p. 91) who makes the mistake of studying the Arab state, on the grounds that there is no such thing: there is only the Muslim state. But is Heykal really wrong? Is it not a fact that this State is Arab (and Muslim)? On page 232, he reasserts his lack of interest in any reality other than the Islamic *umma*. It is an old debate: since the 19th century the peoples of the Arab and (largely) Muslim Orient have been asking themselves the question. What are we in the face of European imperialism? On what bases can we unite to resist it? As Ottoman subjects, Muslim believers or members of the Arab nation (or nations)? Islam, like any other social reality, may be the binding force, in certain circumstances. In Pakistan, quite evidently, it is synonymous with the nation, since the latter is nothing more than a non-Hindu but Muslim Indian nation. But in the Orient, history seems to have determined another social reality for the benefit of nationality. The (Arabic) language seems to be the unifying factor, going further than religious diversity among other factors (since there are Christian Arabs).

Is it possible to establish (or re-establish) the Muslim *umma* as the foundation of social order? And what must be done to achieve this? Here in fact is the sole preoccupation of fundamentalism.

Can it be done? Qotb raises the objections that come to mind in order to reject them. That Islam has been betrayed virtually since the death of the Prophet is surely proof of its weakness (p. 228) and incapacity to constitute a guarantee against degeneration (p. 229)? Qotb rightly rejects the idea that there can be any guarantee against degeneration in history. But he does so to explain the betrayal while clinging to the pure ideology: the people converted too quickly could not be true Muslims; they bore too many vestiges of their

previous affiliations (p. 228). Qotb is not interested in the questions put by historians, be they believers such as Mohamed Heykal and Taha Husayn: how Islam adapted to the conditions of a great state, differing from those of the original small communal sect. Qotb's conviction also supplies him with his answer: the Islamic state could be re-established if the believers were convinced. There is no physical barrier that may not be overcome by ideological conviction. On page 89: we must re-establish the religion–society unity. On page 247: Islam requires more than the re-establishment of Muslim laws in all fields, it requires the conviction of souls. But who then will verify the degree of sincerity of the conviction of souls? Does not what is going on in Iran today show where pursuit of such an objective leads? And when it is realized that Qotb has totally condemned 'utilitarianism', 'empirical science', the pseudo-Islamic philosophy, impious in fact according to him, of Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, etc., where do we go from there?

Fundamentalism is not an inexplicable 'resurgence'. It is a veritable symptom of the global crisis of our society. In this sense it takes multiple forms, adapted to the circumstances of the various segments of our world capitalist society in crisis. The crisis is at the most essential levels of the real existence of human beings, as it is organized by the capitalist and imperialist social system, that is at the levels of class reality and national reality. The worker is deskilled and dehumanized, deprived of any means of control over the social machine. But must we then change society, the organization of social control and of labour, or counterpoise, to the dehumanizing hours of labour, repose in the sacred sanctuaries – of private life and religion? The African and the Asian are denied their history, their culture, their language and also – often – their religion, by three centuries of Western-centrism and a century of imperialist colonization. Does the Western left, which boasts the principle of 'proletarian internationalism', for the most part not in fact prefer 'solidarity of the European nations'? How can the active support of this left for Zionism, its almost unconditional friendship with the 'Israeli people', which has made it accept the political reality of the expansionist Zionist state, be explained other than by the fact, denounced in his day by Aimé Césaire, that Europe recognizes its own image there?

This attitude has much to do with the fundamentalist resurgence in the Orient. A factor accentuated by another factor: that the Arab world has so far shown its powerlessness to liberate itself from imperialist domination and Zionist expansionism. The limits that reforming Arab nationalism has not been able to overcome ('bureaucratic socialism'), the failures of comprador capitalism (which has sometimes followed the failures of the former), are surely the origin of this resurgence? In this sense fundamentalism is a symptom of the crisis, but it offers no solution.

The fundamentalist resurgence entails serious consequences for the Arab peoples. It contributes to driving back Arab national consciousness, by putting a screen of religion in front of it. It may be associated with superstitious and fanatical resurgences, especially in regard to minorities. In this way some may find consolation for their powerlessness in the face of the true enemy. It may

further rigidify the problems of the family. For there, perhaps, lies the hard core of Islamic dogmatism, since the latter, even more than that of Christianity, legislates expressly in this domain (marriage, inheritance, succession, etc.). Christianity and Confucianism also constitute barriers to necessary evolution in this domain. The former has not however prevented real relations between the genders from undergoing profound changes in the past and even more, it would seem, in the future. The latter has had to bend to the Marxist ethic. Will Islam be as flexible?

The fundamentalists nevertheless challenge the system of established power by their frontal assault. Just as Polish Catholicism reminds the Polish nation of its subordinate status, just as Latin-American Christianity revolts against crying social injustice and the political ignominy of the continent's ruling classes, so too these fundamentalisms are different from those that the declining forces seek likewise to revive. The appeal to the religion of the market, of which President Reagan seemed convinced, represents a greater danger, for it dictates aggressive political behaviour.

The resurgence of fundamentalisms in any case calls for a reflection on the analyses produced on the 'transition from capitalism to socialism'. If this must carve out a path, not through lucid conflict around social plans, but through a jungle of obscure confrontations, is this not a form that irresistibly recalls the 'transition from antiquity to feudalism'? We have elsewhere described this form in terms of 'decadence' and the other in terms commonly described as 'revolution'.

Notes

1. The texts that are the subject of this critique are in Arabic, notably Sayed Qotb, *Social Justice in Islam*, Cairo, 1949. A more substantial treatment by us has also been published, likewise in Arabic (*The Crisis of Arab Society*).

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Samir Amin
DELINKING

Is it possible for the Third World to escape from the constraints imposed by the world's economic system? Does not attempting to do so lead inevitably to the stagnation of barrackroom socialism? What room for manoeuvre do Third World states have? Are they condemned to dependence? These are some of the questions Samir Amin confronts in this major development of his theoretical ideas. He argues that Third World countries cannot hope to raise living standards if they continue to adjust their development strategies in line with the trends set by a fundamentally unequal global capitalist system over which they have no control. The only alternative, he maintains, is for Third World societies to 'delink' from the logic of the global system – each country submitting its external economic relations to the logic of *domestic* development priorities, which in turn requires a broad coalition of popular forces in control of the state. Delinking, he shows, is not about absolute autarchy, but a neutralizing of the effects of external economic interactions on internal choices.

With its global approach and illuminating grasp of new realities, Samir Amin presents a fresh attempt – bound to provoke intellectual controversy – to understand the changing nature of global capitalism in the 1980s, as well as to explore the strategic development dilemmas it poses for Third World countries.

Samir Amin's outstanding theoretical work became well-known with the publication of *Accumulation on a World Scale* (1974). Twelve of his books have now been translated into English. He currently heads the Third World Forum's Project on Strategies for the Future of Africa in Dakar, Senegal.

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